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January 2012

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Aaron's 1/48 scale HobbyBoss MiG-17. Jim Forbes photo

FSM'S OWN AARON SKINNER SHOWS YOU HOW, STEP-BY-STEP

BONUS: Metallic paint comparison: Which is best for you?

PLUS

- Create realistic diorama groundwork
- Exclusive coverage: IPMS Nationals

Tiny tank tips:
Build this WWI M1917

OUR EXPERT MODELERS BUILD & REVIEW 9 NEW KITS!

Vol. 30 • Issue 1

Italeri brings reality to life.

24545
UNITED STATES ARMY

NEW TOOLING

1/48th Scale Bell OH-58D Kiowa (552704)

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Italeri continues to make kits to satisfy the serious hobbyist. Always innovative, Italeri's kit selection and choice of scales are often unique. This latest group showcases the Bell OH-58D Kiowa helicopter; Quonset Hut Barracks; UH-60A Black Hawk "Night Raid" and the 1933 Joan Crawford Cadillac Town Car.

1/72nd Scale Quonset Hut Barracks (556163)

1/48th Scale UH-60A
Black Hawk "Night Raid"
(552706)

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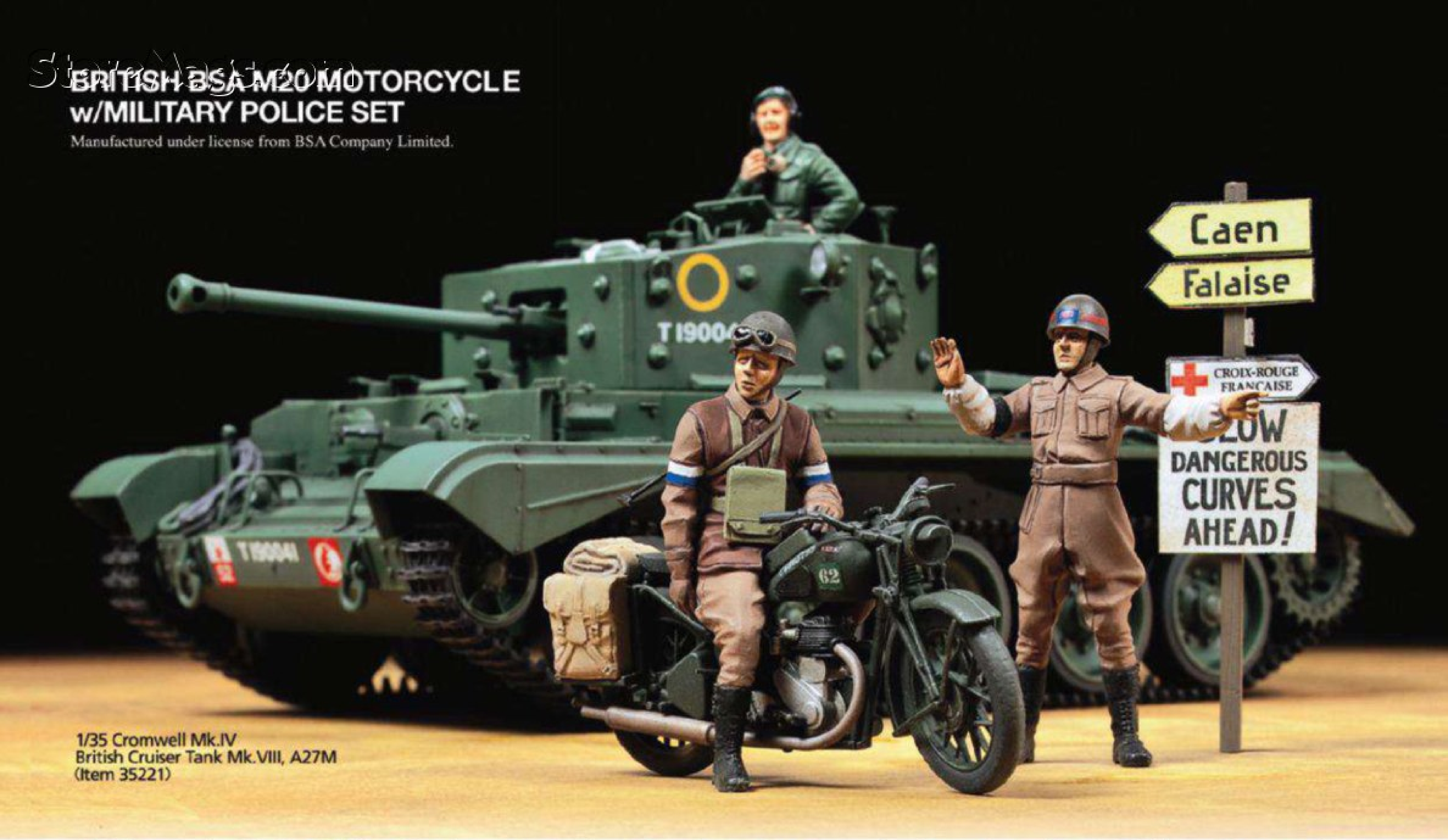
BRITISH BSA M20 MOTORCYCLE w/MILITARY POLICE SET

Manufactured under license from BSA Company Limited.



1/35 Cromwell Mk.IV
British Cruiser Tank Mk.VIII, A27M
(Item 35221)

CAUGHT IN TRAFFIC

1/35 SCALE

1/35 Scale Military Miniature Series
British BSA M20 Motorcycle w/Military Police Set Item 35316

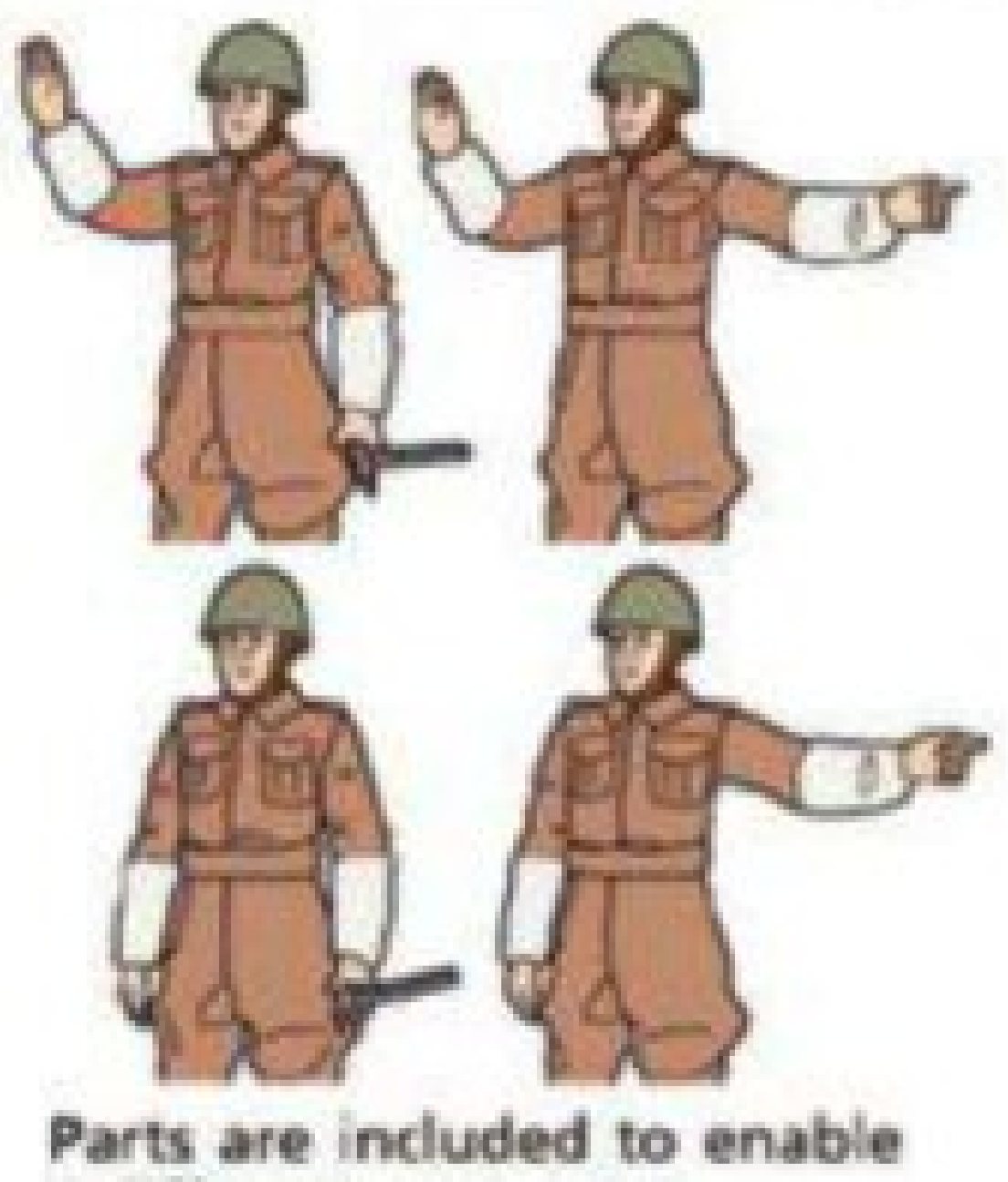
MM-316

Length: 61mm

The BSA M20 was the representative motorcycle used by the British Army during WWII. Over 120,000 units were produced until the end of the war and they were used for a wide range of duties including liaison, reconnaissance, and supply convoy escort. Tamiya's designers thoroughly studied actual examples of this bike and the result is this accurately reproduced model. The model depicts a late-war motorcycle which featured an air filter fitted onto the fuel tank. Included courier and military police figures are depicted in the late-style uniform which was worn in Europe from the Normandy Invasion onwards. Decals depict division markings on the motorcycle as well as MP insignia on the figure's arm and helmet. The package features illustrations of road signs which can be cut out for use. Display this set alongside Tamiya's other models of Allied Forces subjects to enable various diorama possibilities.

Distinctive front suspension and frame are realistically reproduced.

The single-cylinder side-valve engine features superb details.



Parts are included to enable 4 different arm poses.

Image shows actual motorcycle.

Tamiya's 1/35 Scale MM Series offers a variety of British subjects to enable various combinations for dioramas.

British Infantry Tank Mk.IV
Churchill Mk.VII (Item 35210)

British Universal Carrier Mk.II
Forced Reconnaissance (Item 35249)

British Light Utility Car 10HP
(Item 35308)

British Infantry on Patrol
(Item 35223)

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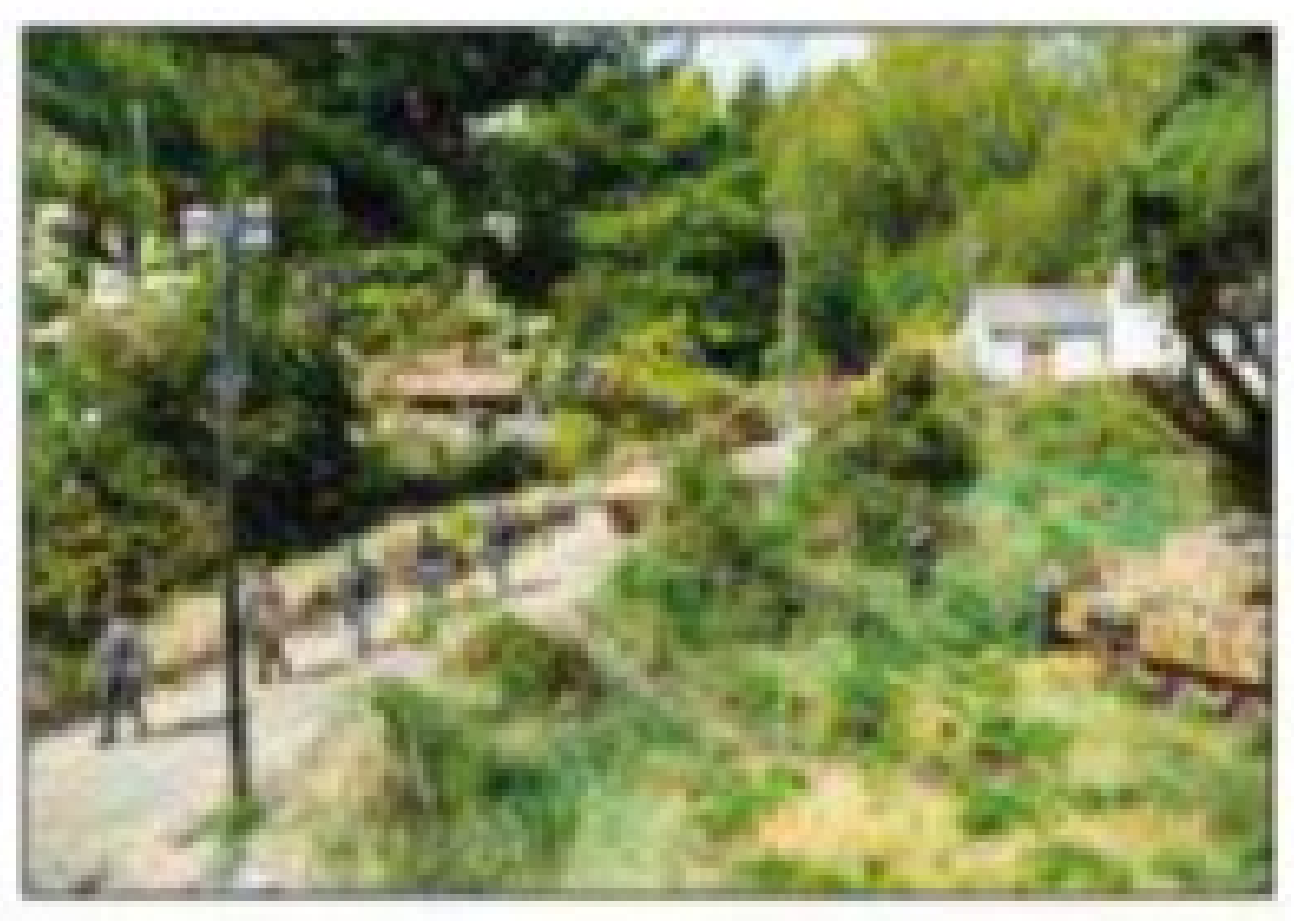

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On the Cover

Step by step, *FSM* associate editor Aaron Skinner shows exactly how surface preparation, polishing, patience, and old-fashioned elbow grease are essential to a flawless finish for bare metal.

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Editor's Page

By Matthew Usher

Any resolutions for the new year?

WELCOME TO our first issue of 2012! Did you make any resolutions to start the new year? I'm not asking about anything related to diet or exercise, of course – I want to know if you made any resolutions related to model building. It may sound unusual at first, but I do try to make one modeling-related resolution every year. Model building is my primary hobby – and one of my primary means of relaxation – so it does play an important role in my life. Every year I try to pick one thing I can do to make the time I spend modeling more fun, more entertaining, or more rewarding.

For example, for many years I struggled with gloss paint. My efforts to apply a smooth, high-gloss coat of paint to a car body or an airliner fuselage led me nowhere. The ruined models, not to mention my frustration, kept piling up.

> **I WAS MORE SATISFIED WITH MY WORK, AND I WAS HAVING A LOT MORE FUN**

Finally, I decided to solve my dilemma. I asked for advice from other modelers, and read every bit of information I could get my hands on. Perhaps most importantly, I kept practicing and incorporating what I'd learned.

Slowly (OK, *very* slowly) I started to see some improvement. The process was still challenging, certainly, but thanks to my resolution, I was much more satisfied with my work, and I was having a lot more fun. By the time the next new year rolled around, I was ready to move on and pick another skill that needed improvement and make another resolution.

Take a minute and think of a model building skill you'd like to do better. Seam filling? Decaling? Figure painting? If something comes to mind, make yourself a resolution to make things better this year. I'll do the same. I promise you'll have more fun modeling, and that's what the hobby's all about.

Enjoy the issue!

Matthew Usher

editor@finescale.com

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GENERAL

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READER GALLERY

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Got a modeling problem? Our Questions & Answers column is here to help. Mail questions to "Q&A" (address at left), e-mail questions@finescale.com, or visit FineScale.com and click on "Contact Us." (For scale modeling basics, visit our website and look through our "How To" article archives.) We are not able to conduct lengthy research, such as answering questions on markings and unit histories. We publish letters of general interest in the magazine; however, mail volume and space limitations prevent us from printing every question. Please include your name, town, state, and a daytime phone number.

READER TIPS

Would you like to share an idea about a tool or technique — and make a few dollars too? Send a brief description along with a photograph or sketch to "Reader Tips" (mail address at left; please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the return of photos. E-mail tips@finescale.com or visit FineScale.com and click on "Contact Us." Tips are paid for upon publication; if you live in the U.S., we'll need your Social Security number to pay you. *FSM* obtains all publication rights (including electronic rights) to the text and images upon payment.

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Scale Talk

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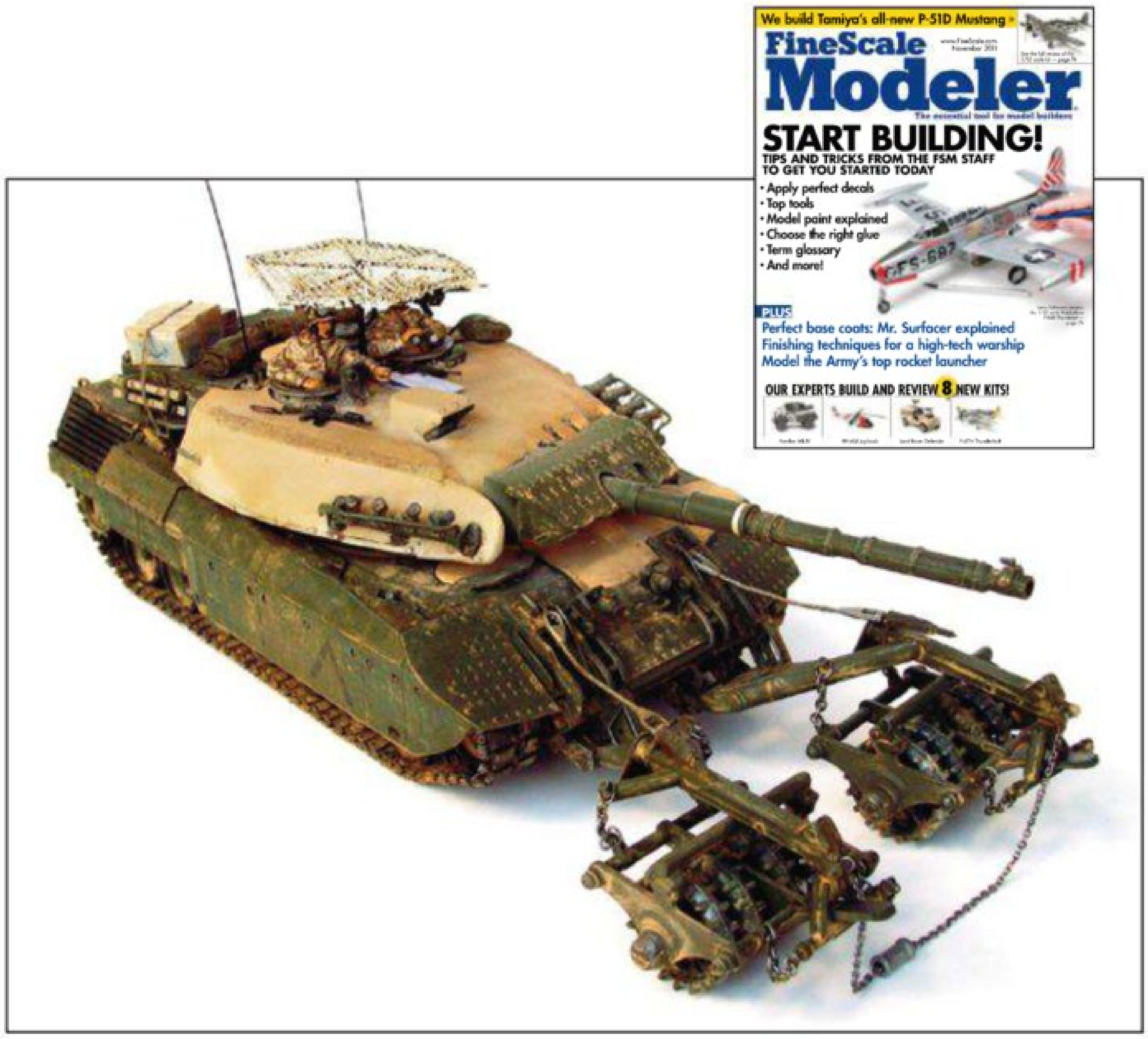
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OUR EXPERTS BUILD AND REVIEW 8 NEW KITS!

Richard Saucier's 1/35 scale Canadian Leopard C2 was featured in *FSM*'s November Reader Gallery.

Personal connection

I really enjoyed the November issue. I was surprised to see the Leopard C2 in your Reader Gallery. I was a driver on this particular tank during my tour in Afghanistan. Richard Saucier did an outstanding job building "T11A" - I wonder if he has a ruck sack cam cover on the left side utility bin! It's great to see a scale version of a tank I actually operated, and it's even better to see it showcased in your magazine. Thank you, Richard, for spending the extra time and effort into making this C2 combat ready!

Perseverance!

- Stephen Thomas
Fredericton Jct., New Brunswick, Canada

Out of the past

How about some kudos for Revell-Monogram and its Selected Subjects Program? I recently purchased the ex-Renwal howitzer, and although the kit is more than 40 years old, it's still a fun build with developmental potential. I'm sure more seasoned modelers could go to town superdetailing it to update it to modern standards. Besides, the subject matter is unique, never having been produced by any other model kit manufacturer.

The good thing about the Selected Subjects Program is that it resurrects subject matter that may not have been produced in the subsequent years. Sure, the detail may not be up to today's standards, but in most cases they're the only game in town. The kits are a great deal of fun to build, and some even have operating features. Older modelers may even feel a wave of nostalgia as they reminisce about building these kits when they originally appeared. Hopefully this great series of reissues will continue with even more Revell, Monogram, and Aurora kits.

- William Mezzano
Addison, Illinois

Mr. Surfacer

I work in a hobby shop. Following your recent article in the November issue about how to use Gunze Sangyo's Mr. Surfacer, we received five phone inquiries. (In the previous four years, I don't believe we'd received a single call about the product.)

I asked each of these callers if they had seen the article, and each one said yes. When they came in, they asked for me, and I showed them the product. Every customer bought a jar.

By the way, it was an excellent article and truly does reflect what a marvelous product Mr. Surfacer is for modelers.

Regards,

- Chuck Bauer
North Oaks, Minnesota

Launcher letter

I was reading the "Here's how to model an MLRS" and noticed that it did not mention that the chassis was built by United Defense (now BAE Systems). The missile launcher was built by Lockheed Martin. The two companies came together to magnificent missile launch system that still serves proudly after all its years of service and surely will for many, many more.

- Gerald Baker
El Paso, Texas

Out of the doldrums

I think it's true that all modelers hit the wall occasionally and find it hard to get jump-started on a new project. Here are a few ideas to get yourself moving again:

Go back and re-read some back issues of *FSM*. If you're anything like me, you blast through the latest issue as soon as it arrives in the mail. I've discovered that by reviewing the last few issues I usually find something I missed (or forgot about).

Clean and organize your workspace so it doesn't look like it was hit by a bomb. Modeling is much more fun when things are clean and organized. It usually ends up being a treasure hunt, too – you might find something fantastic that's been hiding under the debris!

Visit your local hobby shop and buy a new tool. It doesn't have to be anything expensive, either. For the price of a cup of Starbucks coffee I can usually find something that will make me want to jump back in on my current project.

Slam together a simple kit – something you can build in a weekend. Give it to someone who will appreciate it as a gift.

Good luck!

- Mike Lentino
Tempe, Arizona

For our veterans

I've been an avid modeler for a long time. I have accumulated a lot of different kits for projects I planned to create. However, like a lot of ideas, I never got around to working

Let us know what you think!

E-mail your comments, suggestions, corrections, and additional views on *FSM* to editor@FineScale.com, or visit FineScale.com and click on "Contribute to *FSM*." You can also mail typed or hand-printed letters to the address on Page 6.

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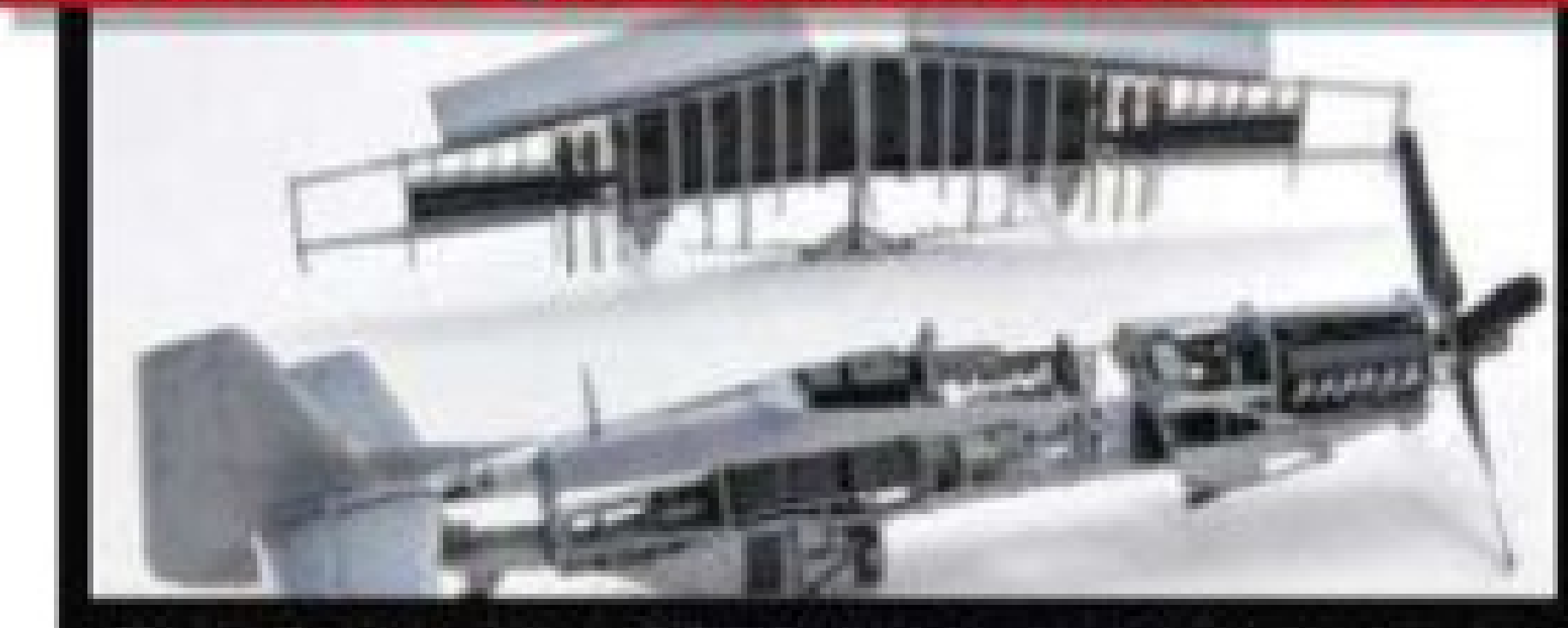

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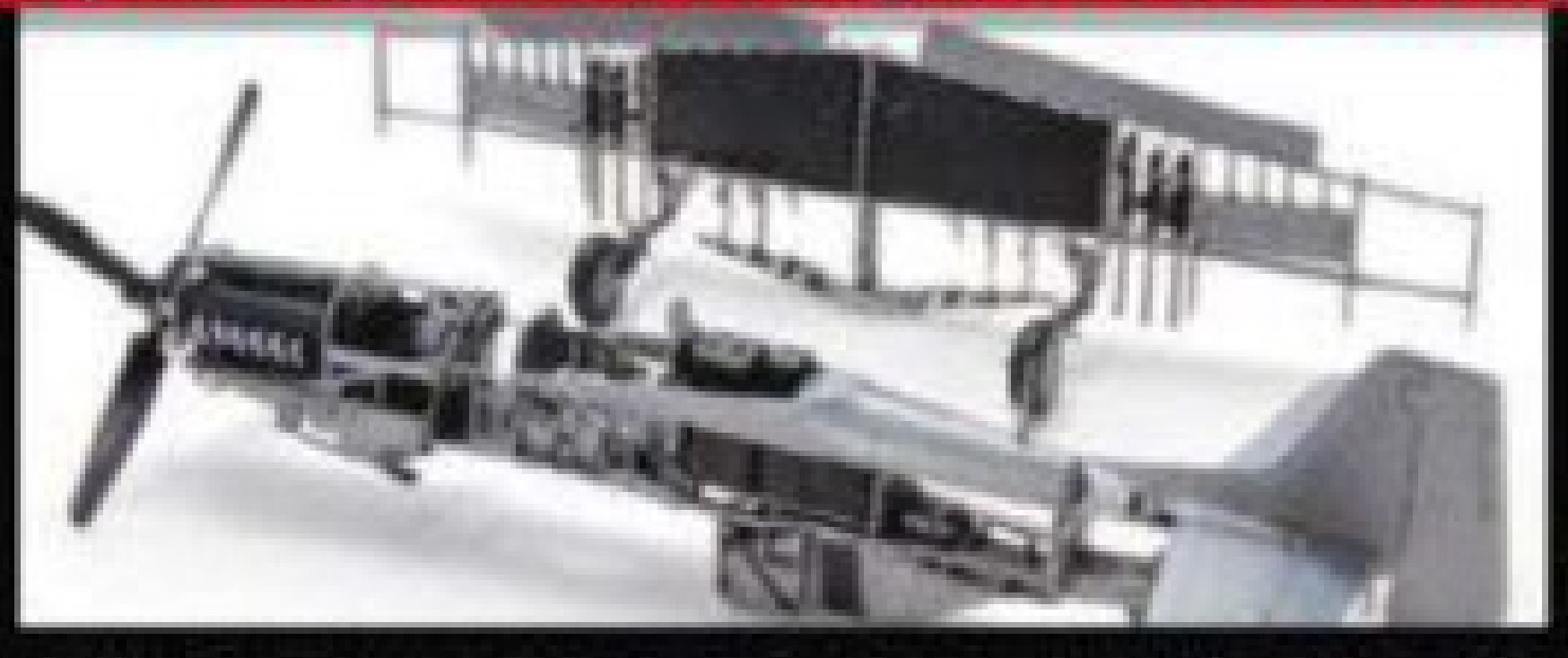

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on these projects. I realized I had too many kits on hand, and I decided to donate them to a worthwhile organization. In the last couple of years I've sent a lot of aircraft, armor, and car kits to a veterans' hospital. They recognized my donation with a nice thank-you note.

This year I continued to thin my collection by donating my unbuilt kits, but now I'm also including a lot of my collection of how-to modeling books.

Simply put, if you'd like to make a lot of our veterans happy, donate some of your kits and model-building supplies to a veterans' hospital in your area (often there's a "craft supervisor" on staff who can accept your donation). You'll be saying thanks to our veterans, and I'll guarantee it will lift your spirits.

- David Bensmiller
Cortez, Colorado

1/700 FAST COMBAT SUPPORT SHIP
AOE-1 USS SACRAMENTO

Trumpeter's USS *Sacramento* was built and reviewed in the September issue of *FSM*.

Give 'em a hand

I just finished reading the September issue of *FineScale Modeler* and I thought I'd pass along a couple of comments.

First, two of the model photos in the Workbench Review section showed the models being held upside-down, by hand. Not only did we get to see an often-neglected view of the models, the hand made the models' scale instantly obvious.

Second, as a former Quartermaster on AOE-3, the USS *Seattle*, my heart leapt when I saw the review of Trumpeter's all-new USS *Sacramento*. I never thought I'd see a kit made of one of the ships in this fantastic class, and I'll will be ordering one through my local hobby store as soon as they open tomorrow.

I do, however, have one small correction to point out: The review text states the *Sacramento* was the lead ship in a class of three. There are actually four ships. The *Sacramento* and *Camden* (AOE-2), and the *Seattle*, and *Detroit* (AOE-4).

Regards,

- Scott A. Akers
Mill Creek, Washington

Correction

The scale of Zvezda's new HMS *Dreadnought* was incorrectly reported on Page 12 in the Spotlight section of the November 2011 *FSM*. The kit is 1/350 scale.

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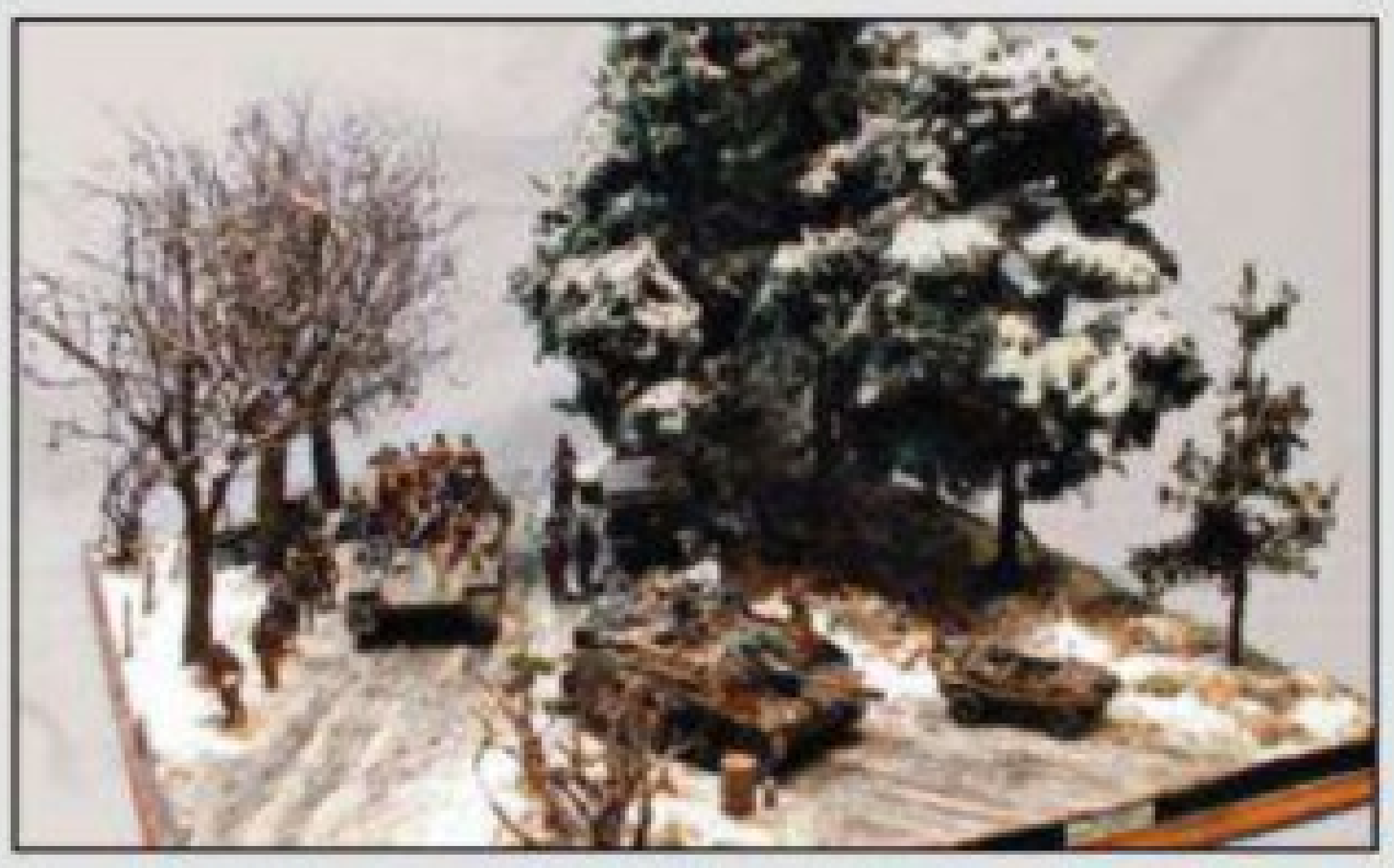
ONLINE EXTRAS

Operational scratchbuilt ships
Tim Quinlan is on a mission to scratchbuild a 1/96 scale model of every ship in the U.S. Navy during the Spanish-American War. Check out some of his finished ships.

Scratchbuilding trees
See how Terry Young scratchbuilt trees for his large Battle of the Bulge diorama, featured in the April FSM.



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SE.5a 'Hisso'
1/32

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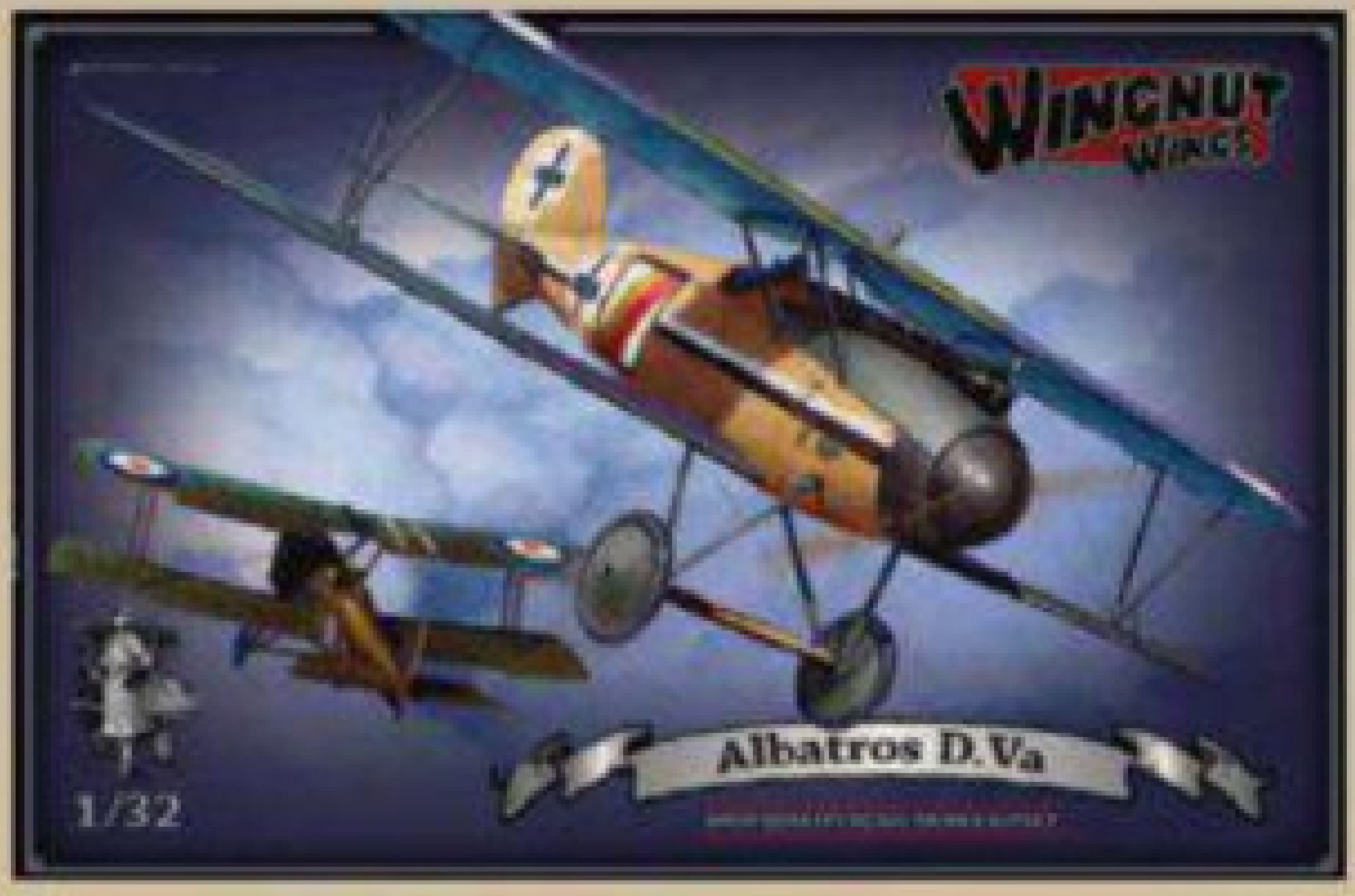
Albatros D.Va
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32022 **1/32 Roland D.VIa** US$65.00

New in December

?

New Model

1/32

New in December

?

New Model

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New models In Development -

1/32 Sopwith Triplane
1/32 Fokker D.VII
1/32 FE.2b
1/32 Fokker E.II/III
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1/32 Fokker E.IV
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Spotlight

Compiled by Aaron Skinner

Tasca goes big again with Zündapp

ZÜNDAPP KS750
w/SIDECAR
tasca
1
24

Tasca, best known for its series of 1/35 scale Sherman tanks, impressed the modeling world with a 1/24 scale PzKpfw II in late 2009. Now the Japanese manufacturer follows up with a 1/24 scale Zündapp KS750 and sidecar (No. 24-004) that looks every bit as nice as the previous offerings.

Molded in dark gray plastic, the parts have a good mix of fine recessed and raised detail. The edges of things like the fenders are extremely thin, and some of the small parts, such as the throttle linkage, are scale-thin and will need to be handled with a lot of care to avoid breaking them. Fortunately, many of the sprue attachment points are as fine as I've seen in a plastic kit.

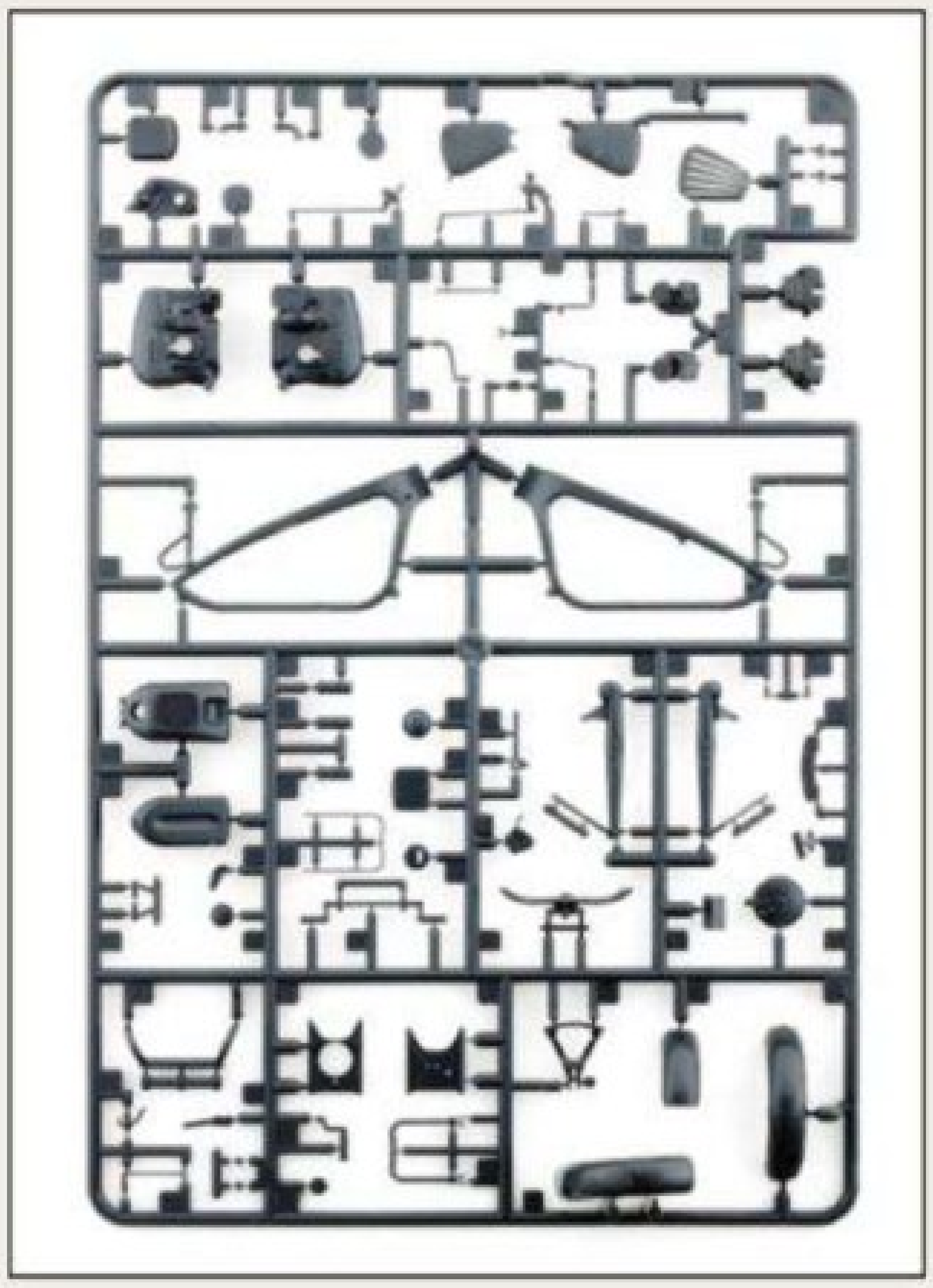
The kit includes a detailed engine and frame. Wheels and tire sidewalls are molded together with extraordinarily thin spokes, but the tread sections are six segments that fit into slots in the sidewalls. The kit includes wire to replicate brake lines and the electrical system, and two metal coil springs for the driver's seat.

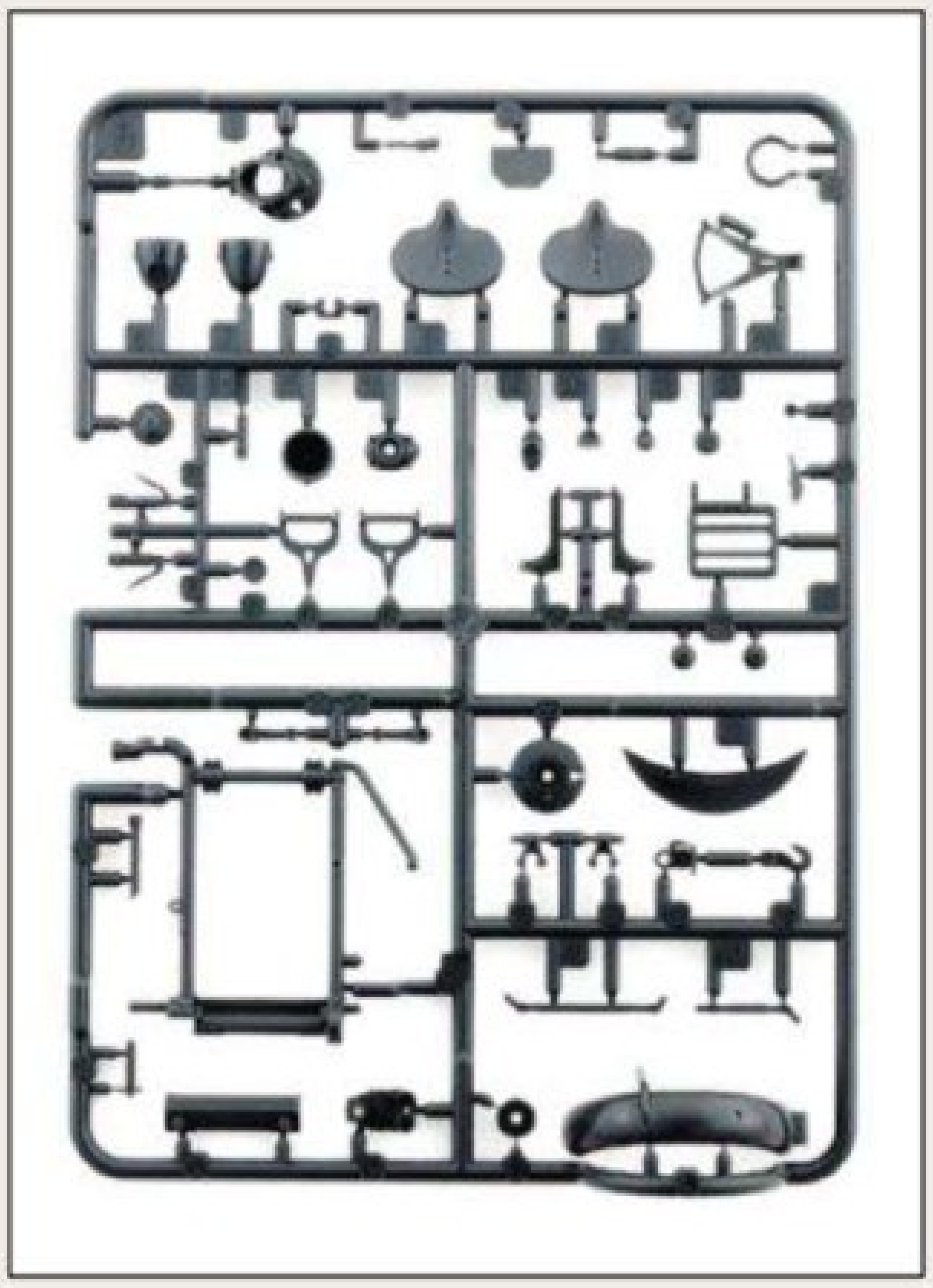
The instructions are clear, with English and Japanese callouts and painting instructions throughout referencing Tamiya paints by name and number.

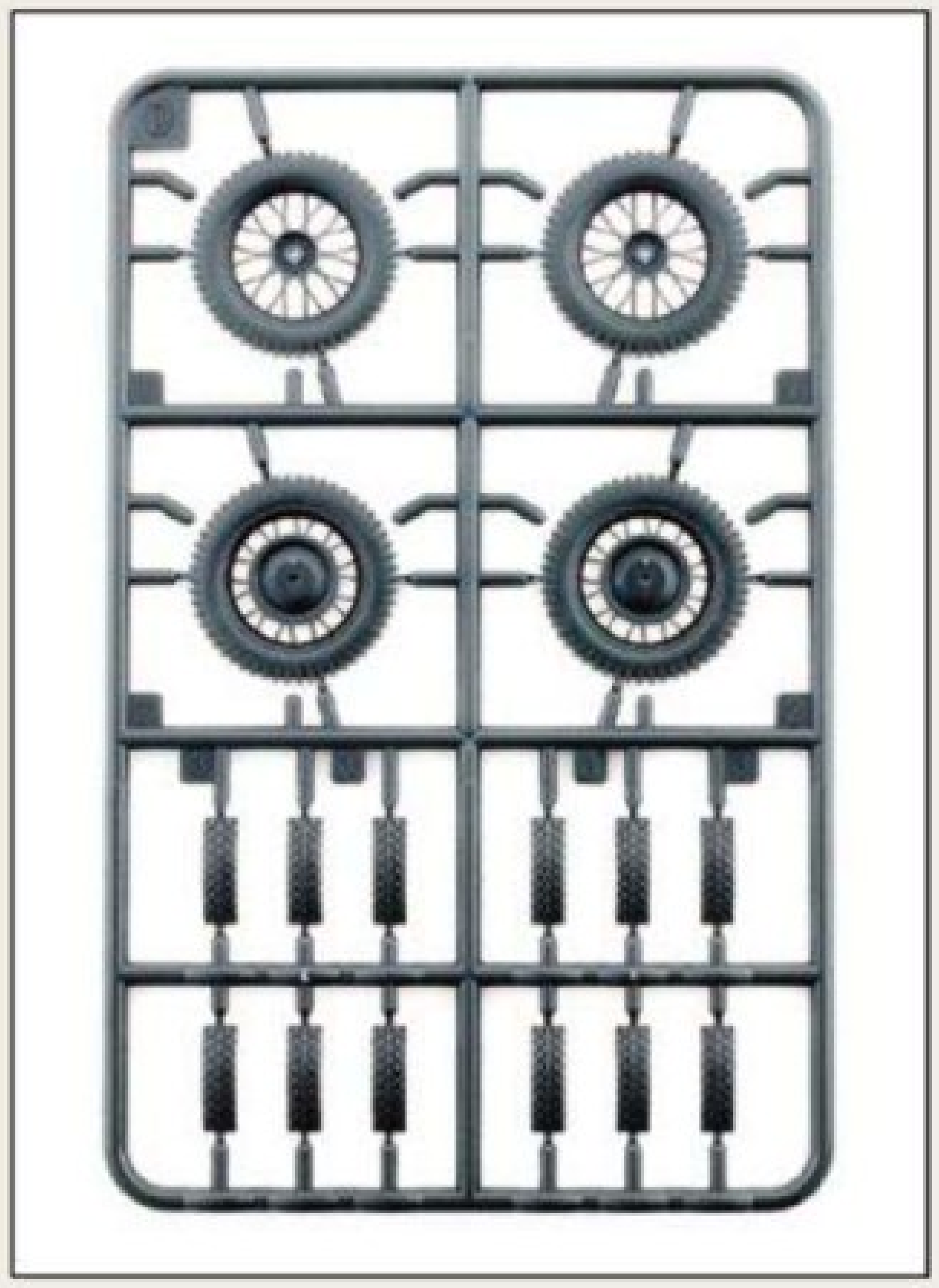
A small decal sheet provides markings for five German army motorcycles: Four dark gray Eastern Front machines and a desert yellow machine in Tunisia in 1943. No figures are included.

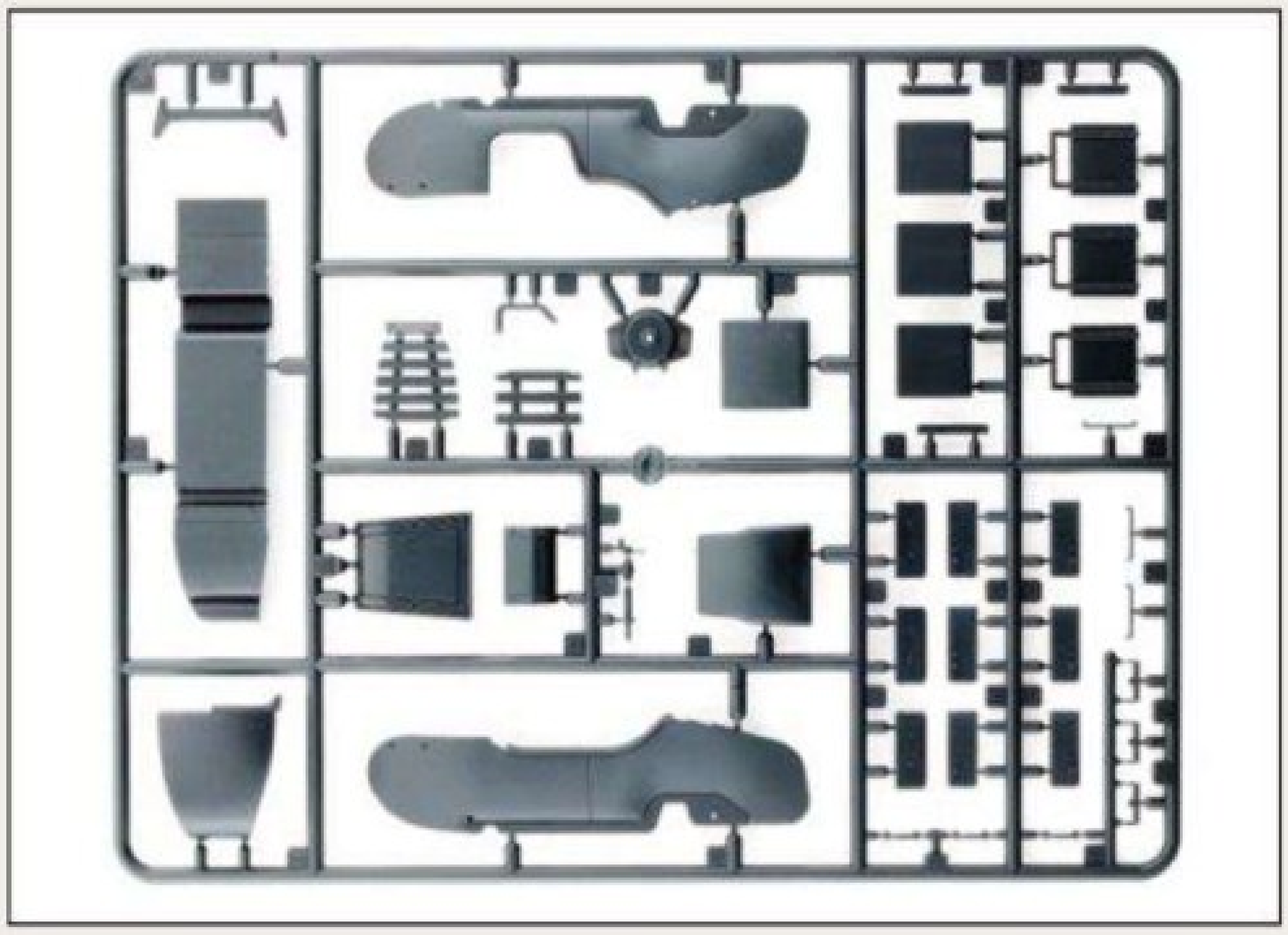
This nicely detailed kit — a credit to modern plastic molding — should build into an impressive model.

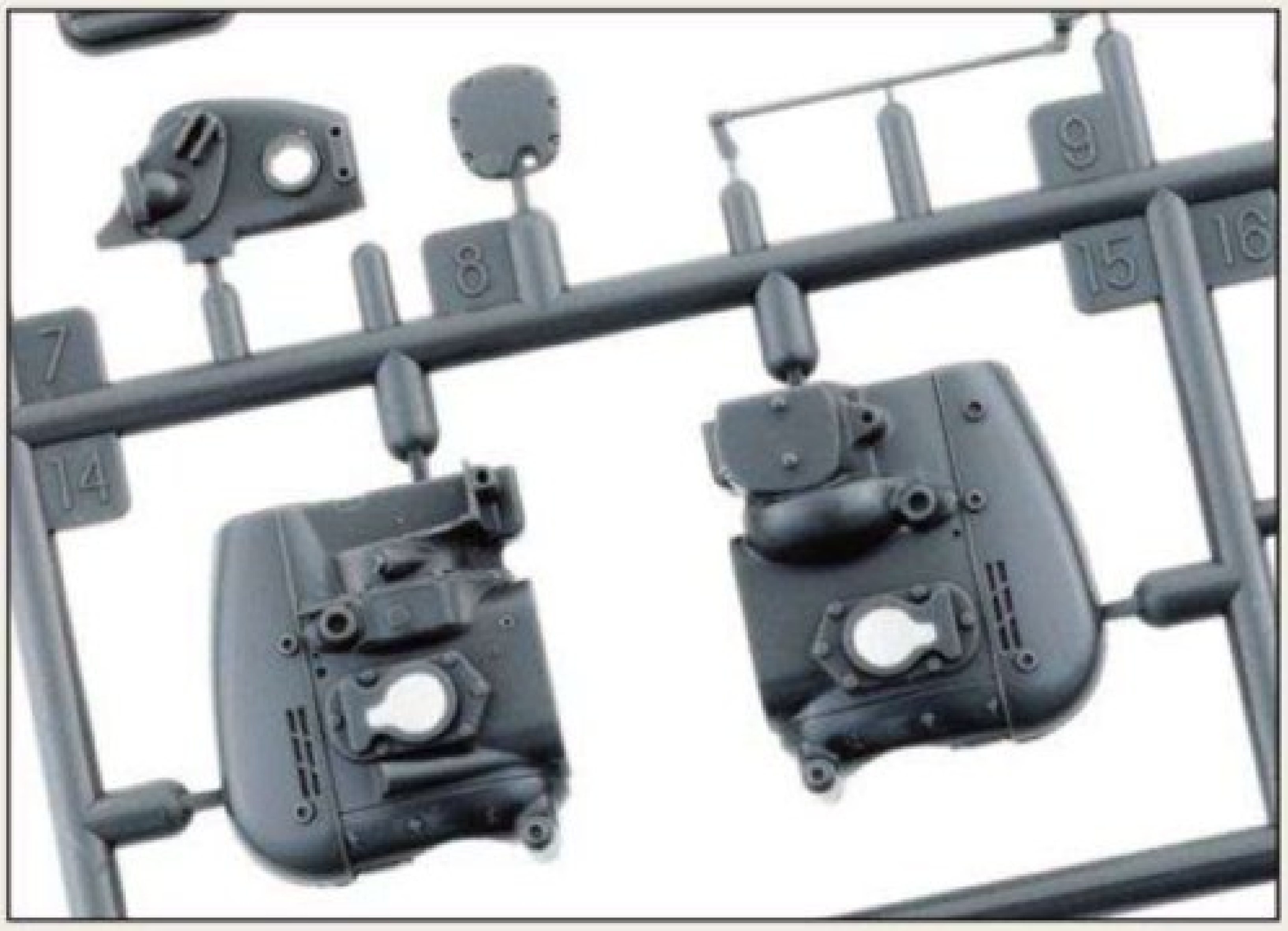
Distributed in the United States by Pacific Coast Models, 707-538-4850, www.pacmodels.com, the Zündapp retails for $57.95.

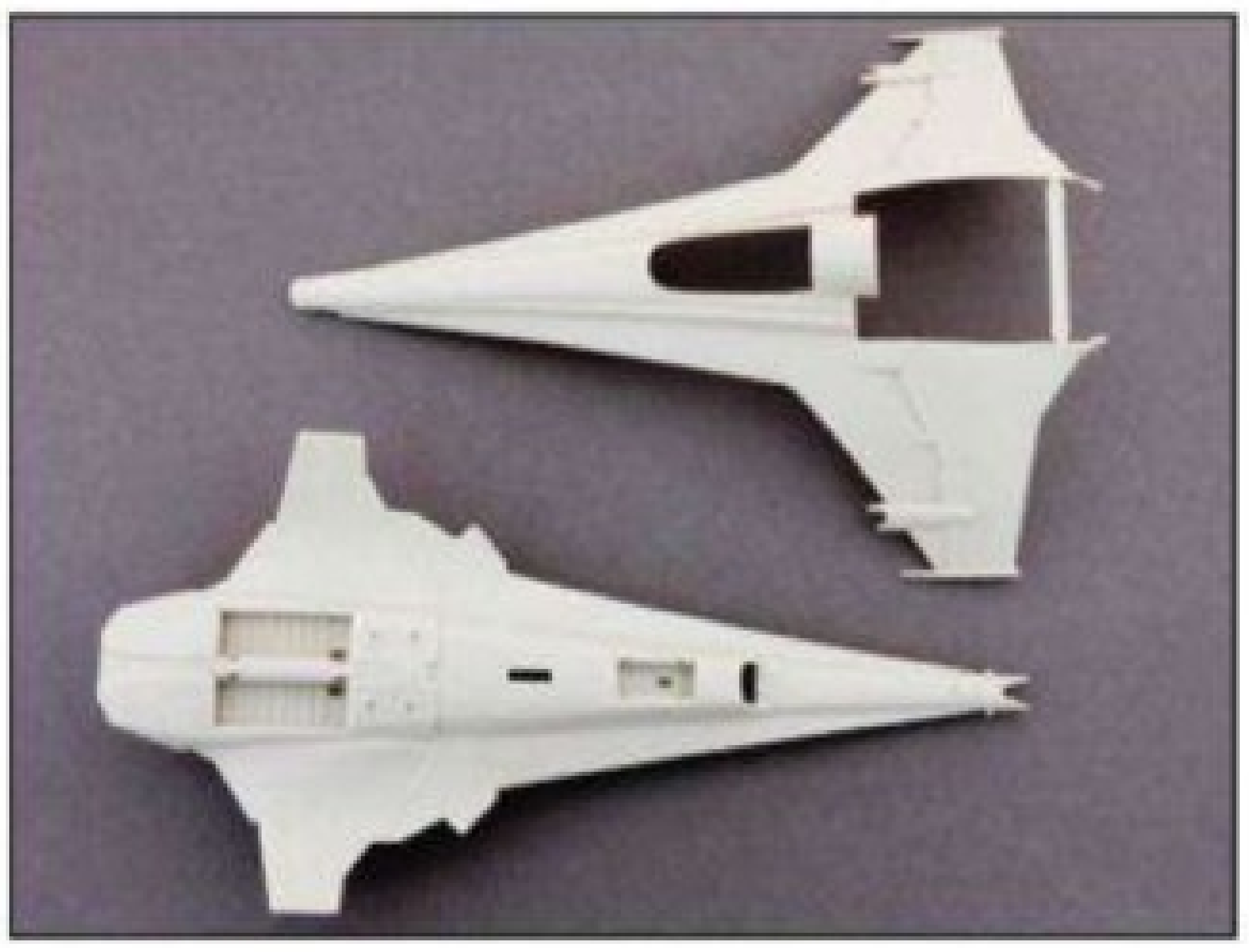












BSG fans get up-to-date with Viper Mk.VII

BATTLESTAR
GALACTICA
COLONIAL VIPER MkVII

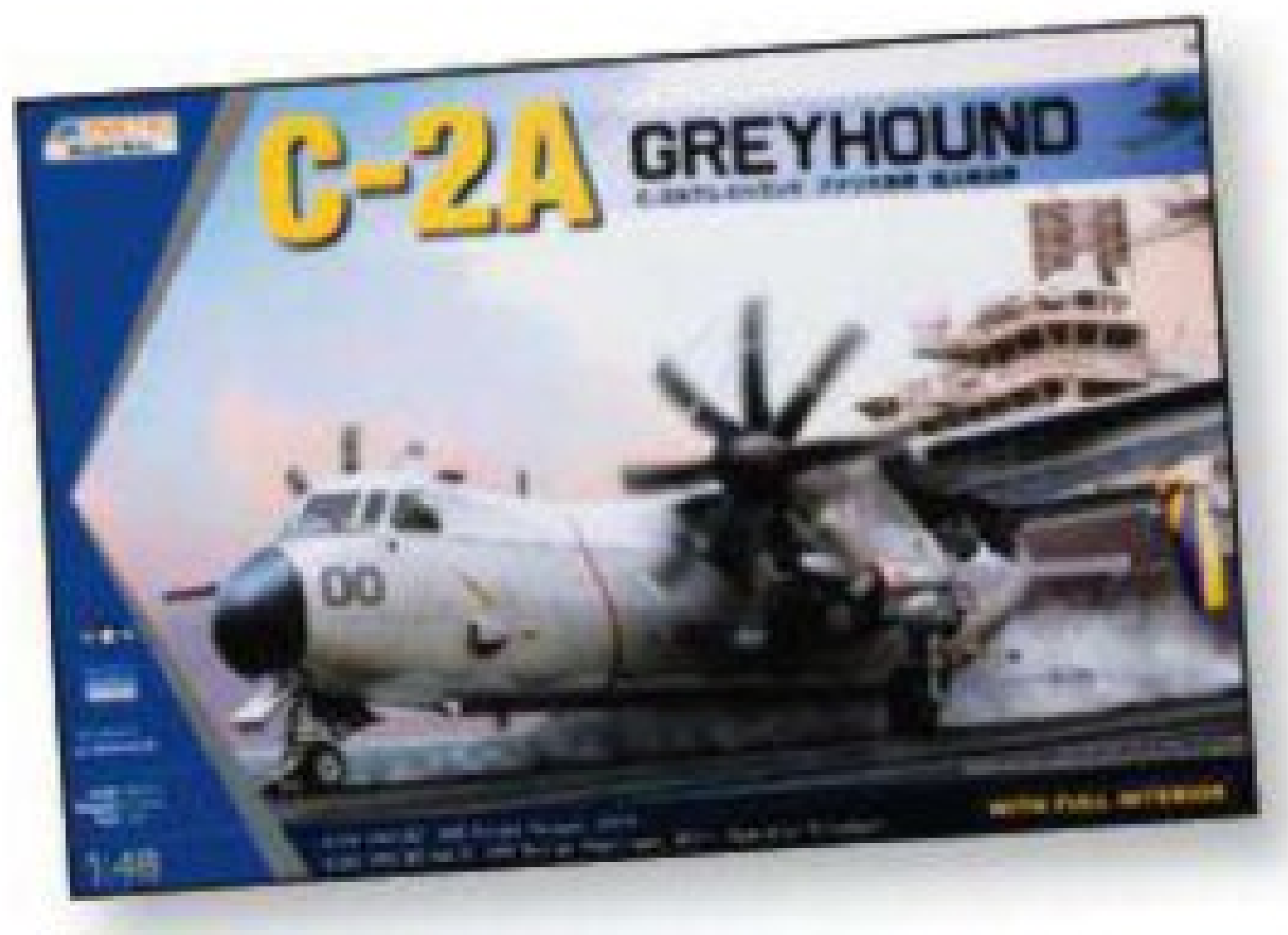
At the beginning of the Cylon attack in the reimagined version of "Battlestar Galactica," the Colonial fleet's main fighter was the Viper Mk.VII, a sleek update of the Mk.II design (itself a streamlined redesign of the original-series Viper). For its third kit from the new "Battlestar Galactica," Moebius puts forth this pointy attacker (No. 916) in 1/32 scale to match the company's Viper Mk.II released in 2010.

Molded in bone-colored plastic, the parts are thick and have engraved panel lines. Cockpit detail includes a tub, seat, and the choice of a male or female pilot. The Viper can be built in-flight on a stand or gear-down on the ground. The bottom of the kit's box is printed to look like a battlestar's flight deck for use as a backdrop when displaying the model.

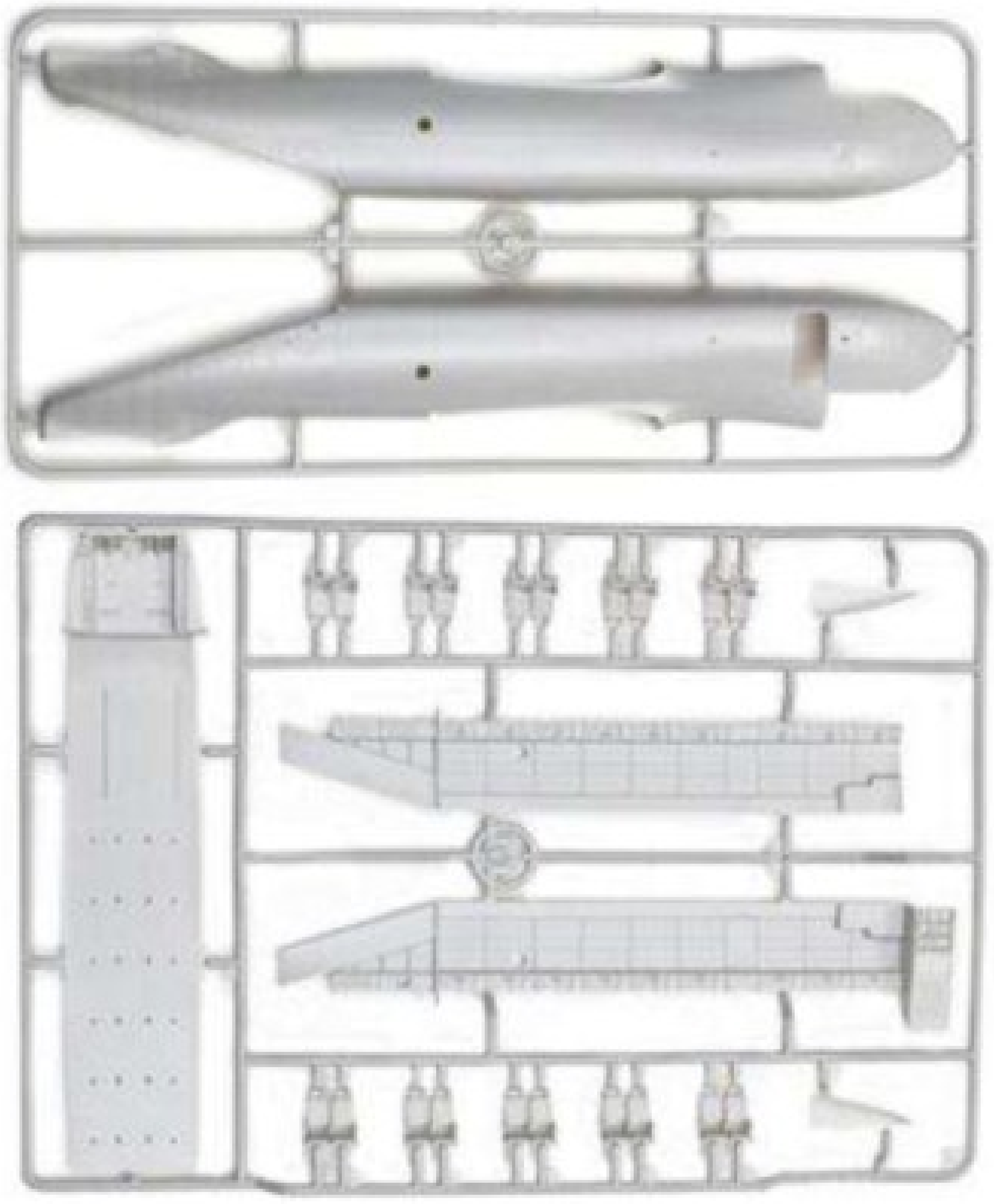
The instructions comprise exploded-view diagrams accompanied by text instructions. Painting instructions are in chart form on the last page of the instruction book and reference Testors enamels and acrylics.

Decals are provided to mark Vipers from both *Galactica* and *Pegasus*, including pilot names, Cylon kill marks, and stencils.

The kit costs $29.99. For more information, go to www.moebiusmodels.com.



Kinetic delivers with C-2 Greyhound



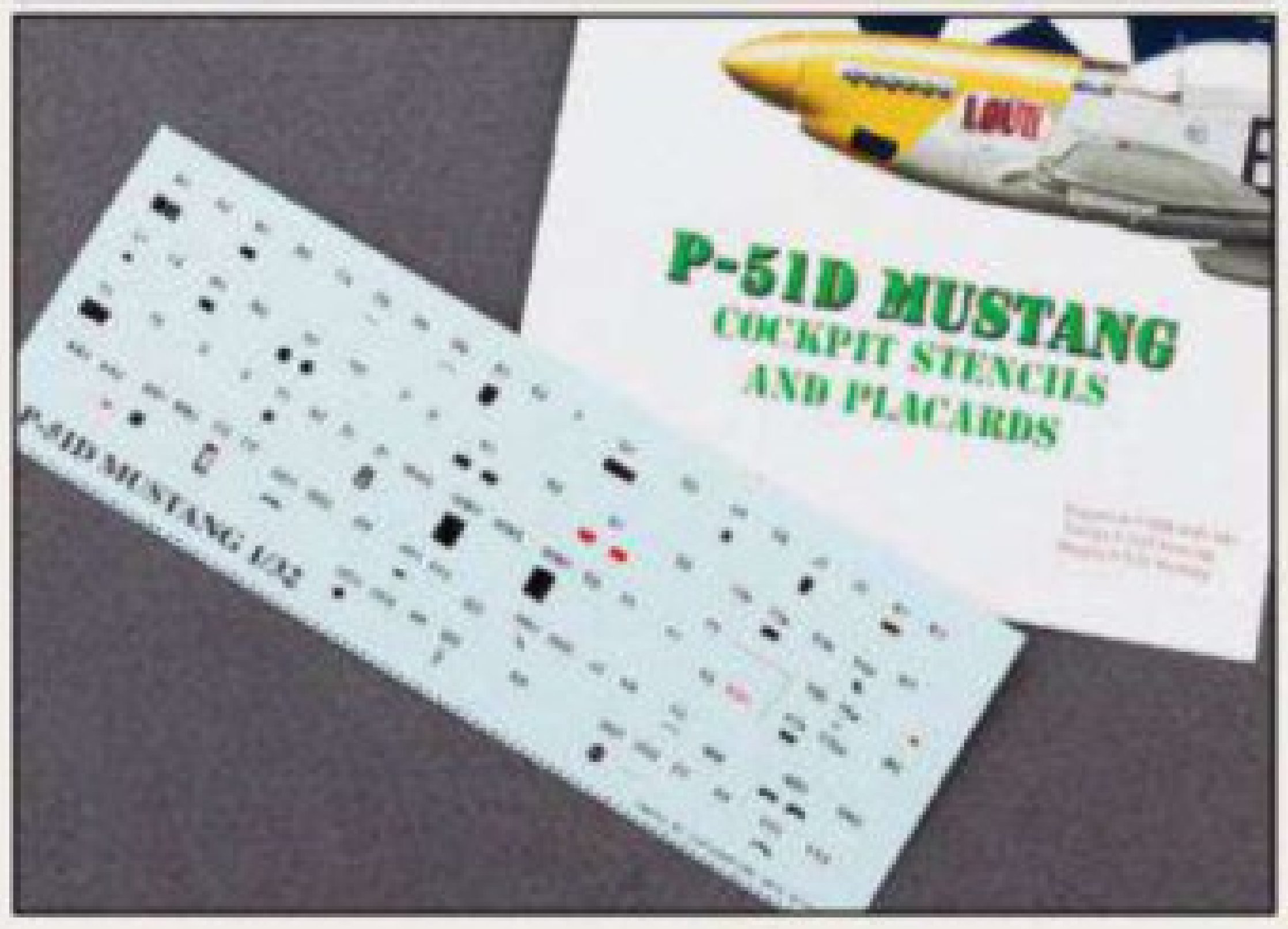
Following on the heels of its E-2 Hawkeye comes Kinetic's 1/48 scale C-2A Greyhound (No. 48025). The plump Grumman has served as the carrier onboard delivery (COD) aircraft for the U.S. Navy since 1966. But this is the first injection-molded kit of it in any scale.

While many of the light gray parts are borrowed from the Hawkeye, this release includes a new fuselage and wing center section as well as a modified tail.

There's a full interior, too, including 20 rear-facing passenger seats, walls, and a cargo cage. The model can be built with the side door and cargo ramp open as well as with wings folded. Both four- and eight-blade propellers are provided.

A large sheet of Cartograf-printed decals provides markings for two Greyhounds: One from VRC-30 aboard the USS *Ronald Reagan*, the other from VAW-120. The kit is distributed in the United States by Stevens International, 856-435-1555, www.stevenshobby.com, and costs $109.95.

BarracudaCals
P-51D Mustangs Part 1



New Mustang markings from BarracudaCals

North American's P-51Ds flew with some of the most colorful markings seen on U.S. Army Air Force aircraft, a fact that keeps decal manufacturers cranking out Mustang sheets.

BarracudaCals has released a set featuring five 8th Air Force P-51Ds in three popular scales: 1/72 (No. BC72009, $9.95), 1/48 (No. BC48011, $11.95), and 1/32 (No. BC32009, $13.95). Printed by Cartograf, the sheets cover colorful markings for: *Double Trouble two,* flown by Lt. Col. "Wild Bill" Bailey, 353rd Fighter Group, 352nd Fighter Squadron; *The Millie G*, flown by Maj. Edward Giller, 55th Fighter Group, 343rd Fighter Squadron; *Amorous Len III*, a fictional Mustang flown by Capt. Reager, 357th Fighter Group, 363rd Fighter Squadron; *Lou IV*, flown by Lt. Col. Thomas Christian, 361st Fighter Group, 375th Fighter Squadron; and *Alabama Rammer Jammer*, flown by Lt. Arthur Cundy, 353rd Fighter group, 352nd Fighter Squadron. Each sheet includes the unique markings for each subject as well as national insignia and stencils to mark a single model.

The instructions comprise profiles and extensive notes about the colors and camouflage applied to the aircraft.

In hot pursuit of Tamiya's 1/32 scale Mustang, BarracudaCals has also released a set of P-51D cockpit stencils and placards (No. BC32010, $7.95). The small sheet holds more than 100 tiny markings that should really dress up the big kit's well-detailed front office.

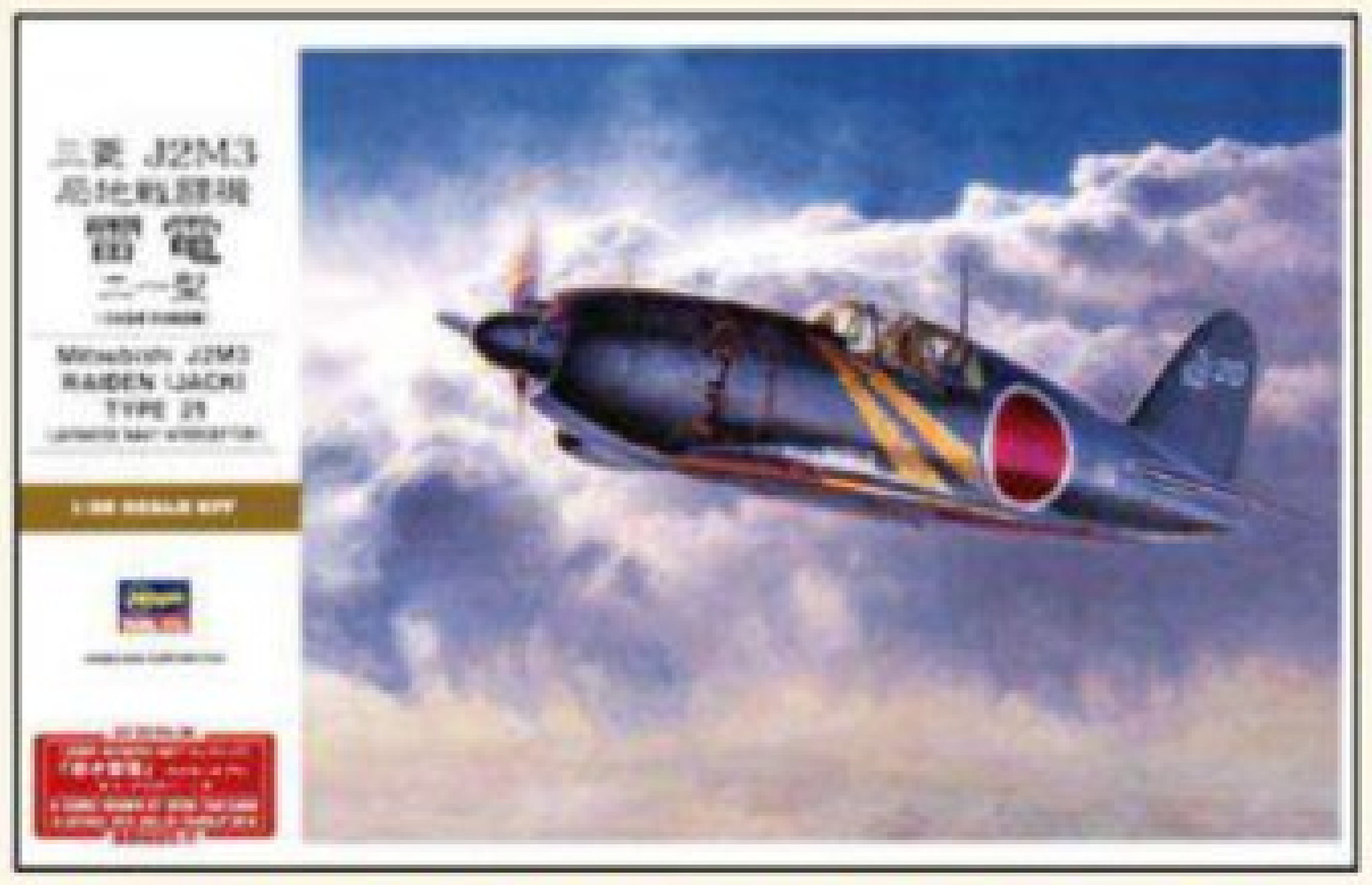
For more information, or to order these and other BarracudaCals markings, visit www.barracudacals.com.

New Products

Compiled by Monica Freitag

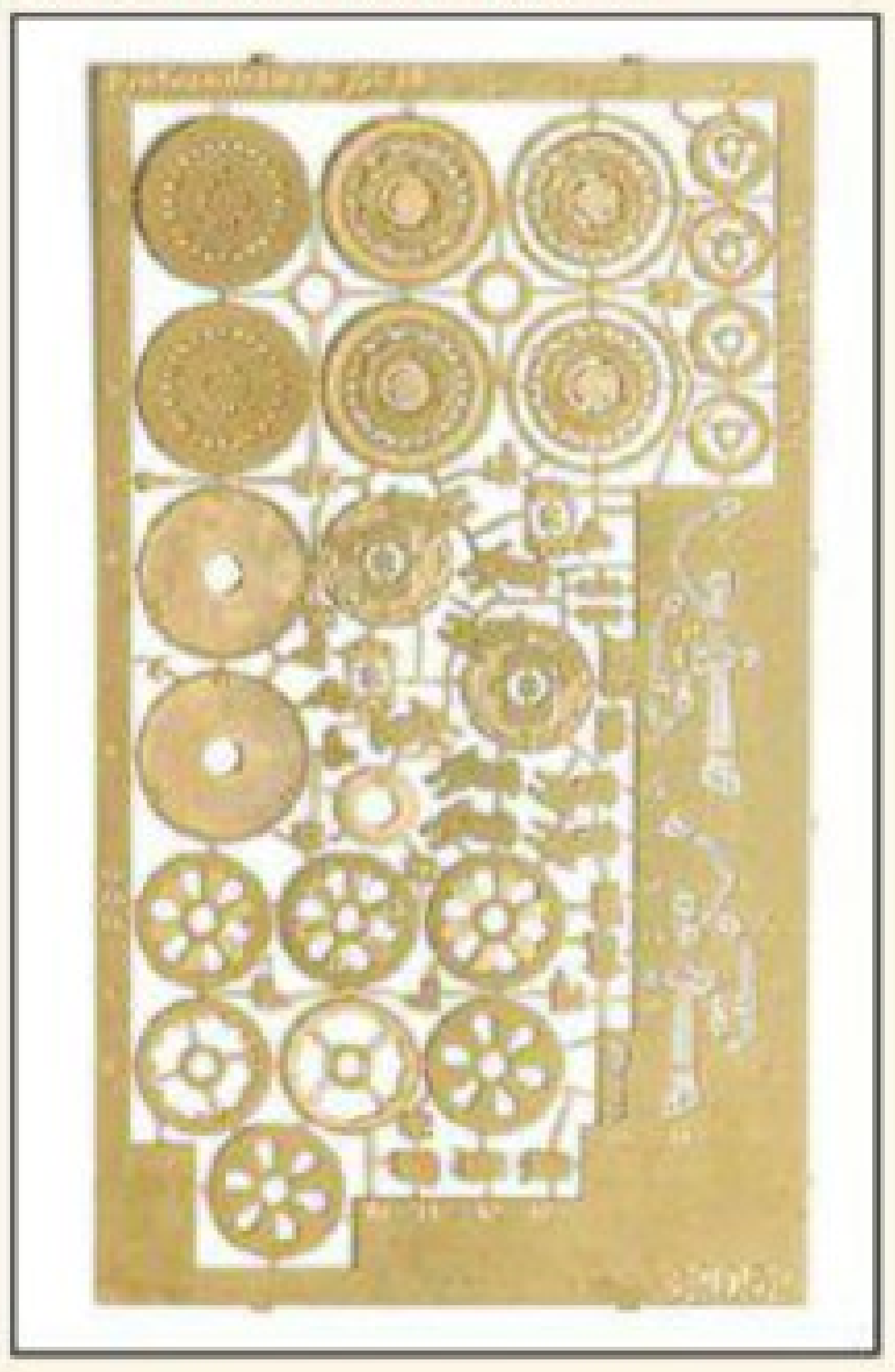
AIRCRAFT

1/32 SCALE KITS


J2M3
Mitsubishi J2M3 RAIDEN (JACK) TYPE 21

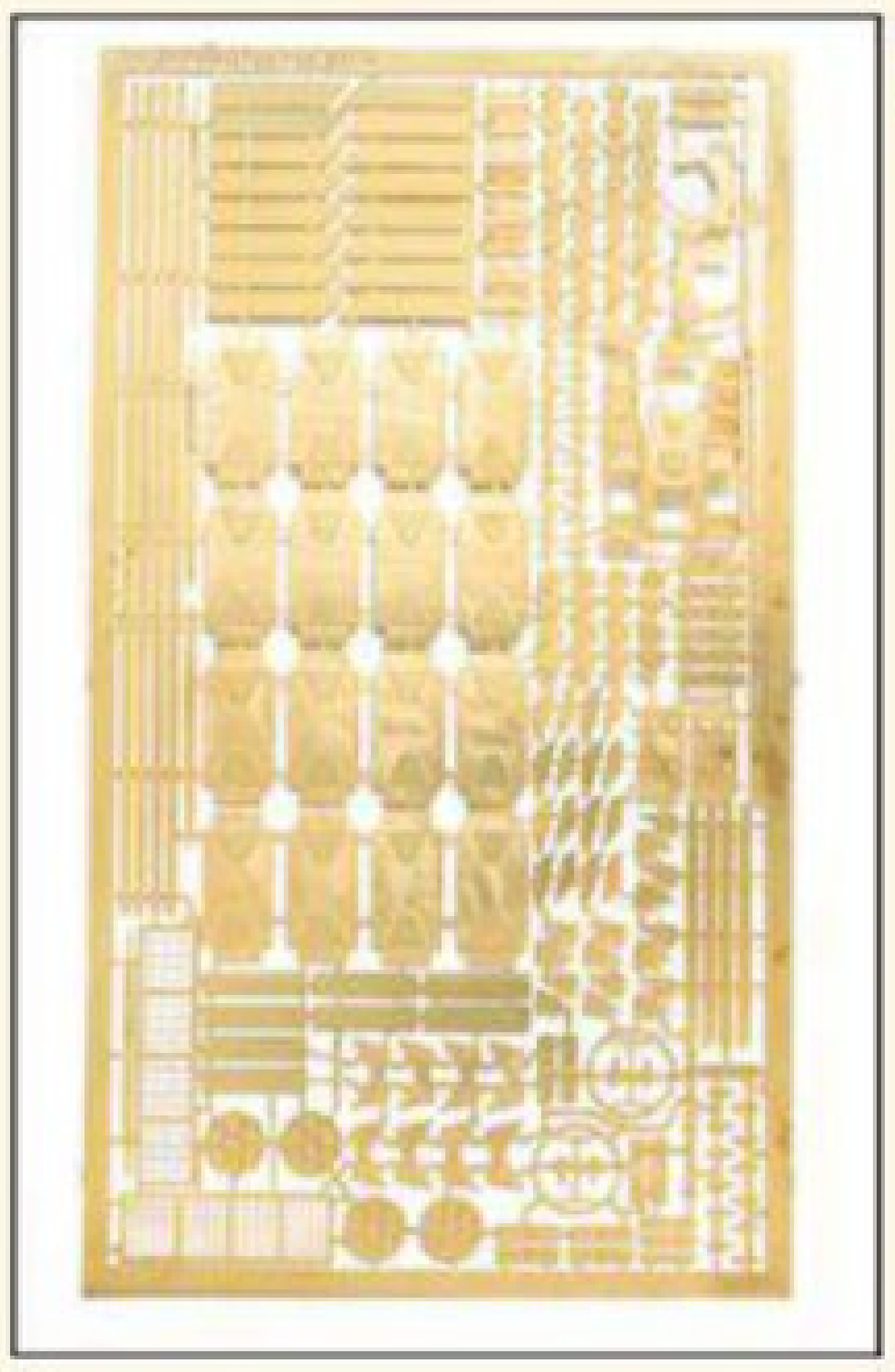
Mitsubishi J2M3 *Raiden* "Jack" Type 21, Japanese Navy interceptor, No. 08882, $74.99. Look for a detailed review in an upcoming issue of *FSM*. From Hasegawa, available from Hasegawa/Great Planes Model Distributors.

1/32 DETAIL SETS

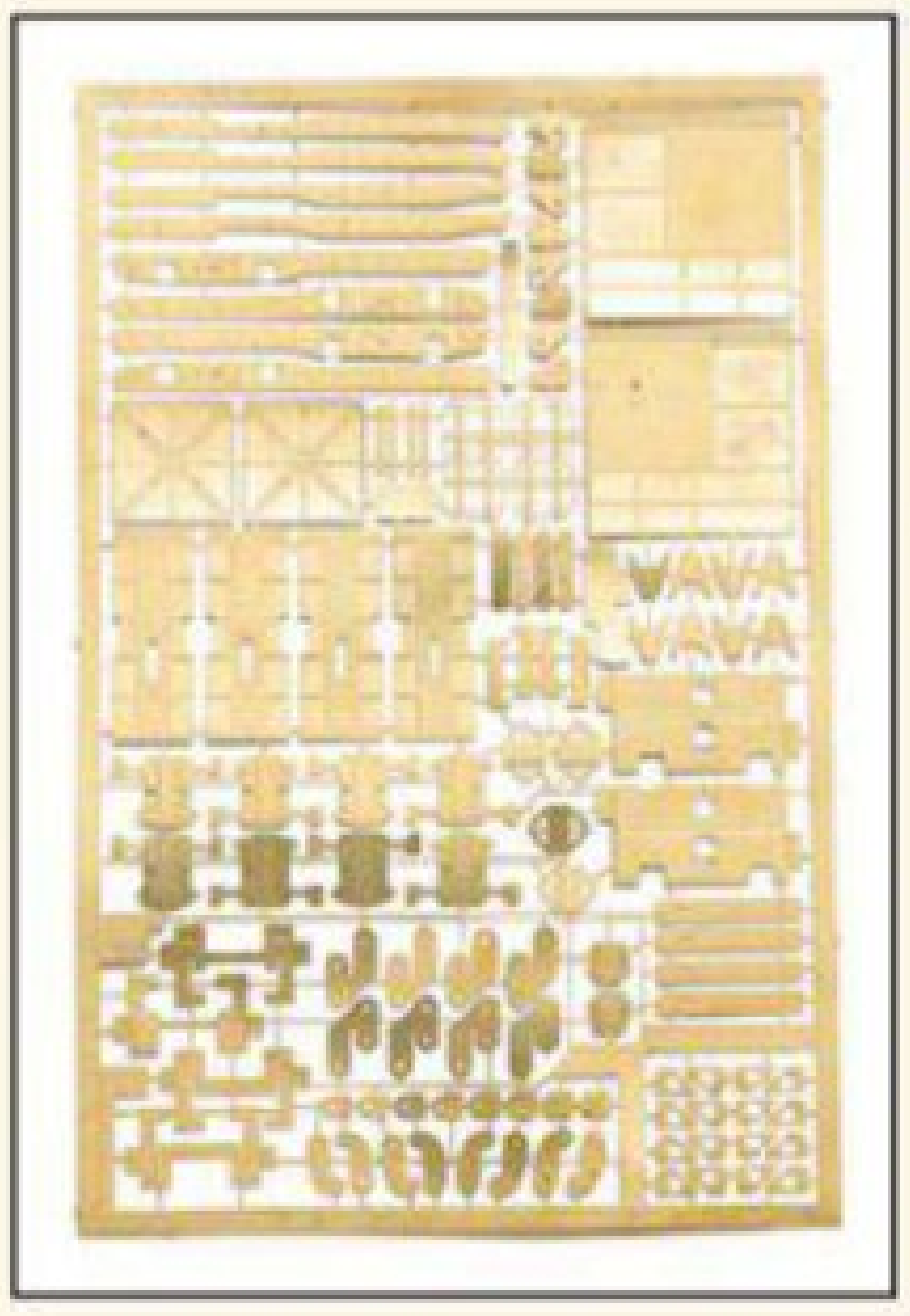


Su-25 wheel disks (for Trumpeter), No. 32052, $7. From Profimodeller, available from UMM-USA.

Su-25 armament (for Trumpeter), No. 32033, $29. From Profimodeller, available from UMM-USA.



MiG-23 (for Trumpeter), No. 32020, $16.75. From Profimodeller, available from UMM-USA.



F-117 bomb bay (for Italeri), No. 32009, $27. From Profimodeller, available from UMM-USA.

Heinkel He III landing gear (for Revell), No. 32056, $21.95. From Scale Aircraft Conversions.

1/32 DECAL SETS

P-51D Mustang Part 1, No. BC32009, $13.95. 5 schemes with full color instruction. From BarracudaCals.

P-51D Mustang cockpit stencils and placards, No. BC32010, $7.95. 5 schemes with full color instruction. From BarracudaCals.

1/35 DETAIL SETS

Mi-24V wheels (for Trumpeter), No. 32057, $11. From Profimodeller, available from UMM USA.

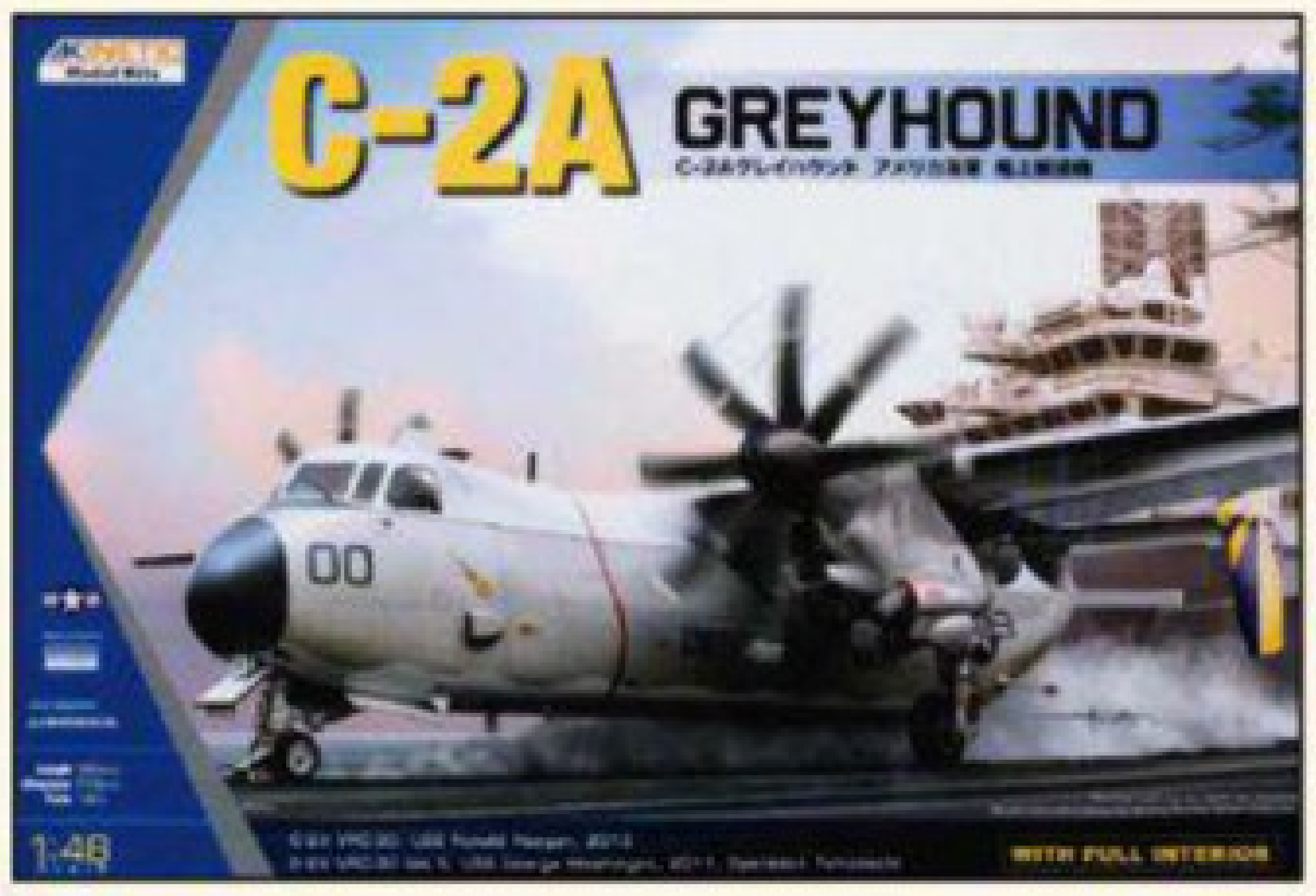
1/48 SCALE KITS

AZmodel
Vultee Vengeance „in RAF"
1/48
AZ 4849

Vultee Vengeance (RAF), No. AZ4849, $55.41. American light bomber. Look for a detailed review in an upcoming issue of *FSM*. From AZ Model, available from UMM USA

RODEN
1:48
No 432
De Havilland DH4 w/RAF3a

de Havilland DH.4 with RAF3A, No. 432, $37.99. British WWI two-seater. From Roden.


KINETIC
C-2A GREYHOUND
1:48
WITH FULL INTERIOR

C-2A Greyhound, No. 48025, $109.95. From Kinetic, available from Stevens International.

14
Messerschmitt Bf109G-2 Trop 'MARSEILLE'

Messerschmitt Bf 109G-2/Trop "Marseille," No. 09952, $49.99. From Hasegawa, available from Hasegawa/Great Planes Model Distributors.

1/48 DETAIL SETS

F4U Corsair landing gear (for Hasegawa), No. 48148, $14.95. From Scale Aircraft Conversions.

Spitfire Mk.XII/Seafire F.XVII landing gear (for Airfix), No. 48149, $13.95. From Scale Aircraft Conversions.

Tempest Mk.V landing gear (for Eduard), No. 48151, $13.95. From Scale Aircraft Conversions.

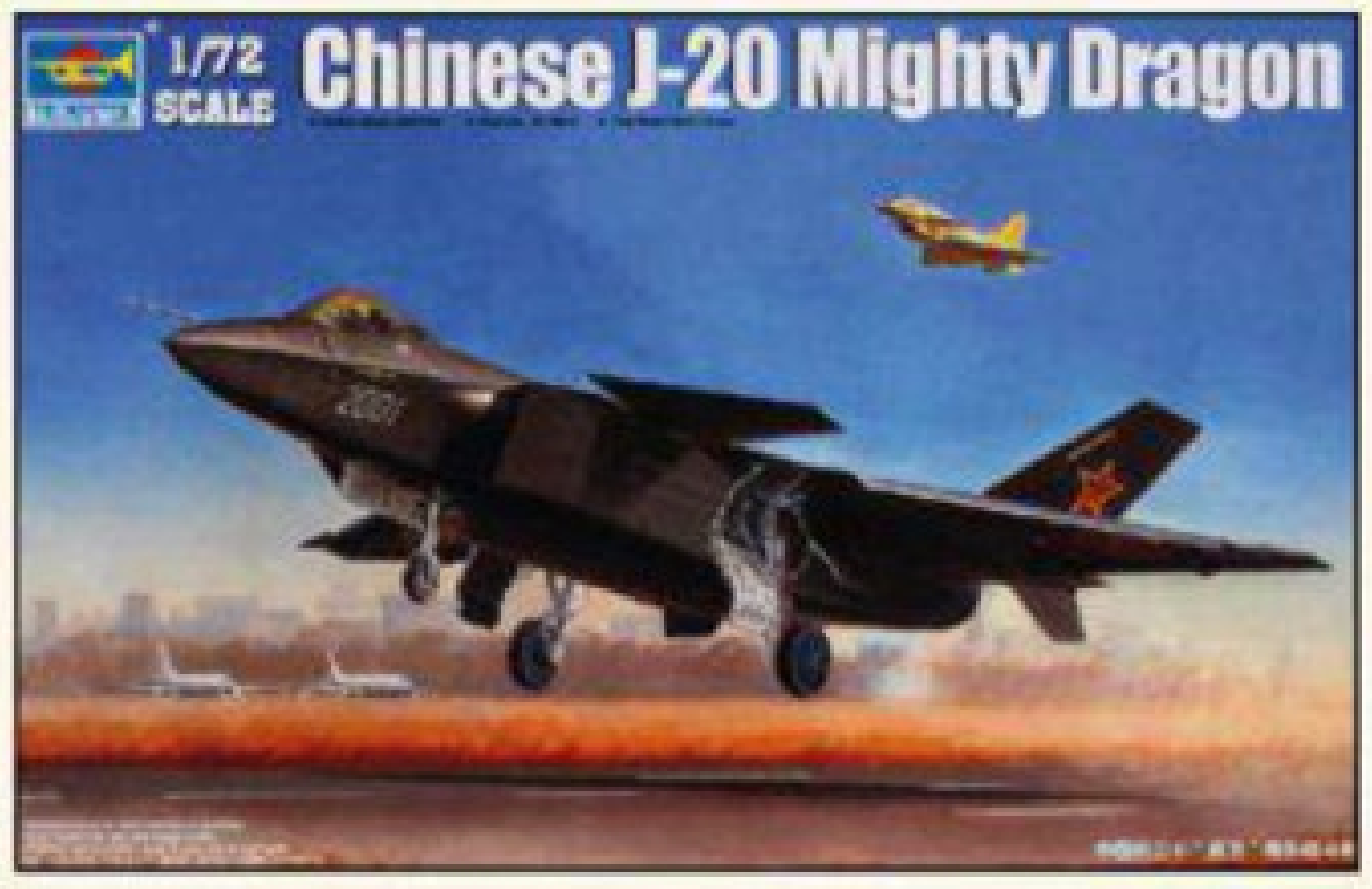
F3H Demon landing gear (for HobbyBoss), No. 48150, $16.95. From Scale Aircraft Conversions.

1/48 DECAL SETS

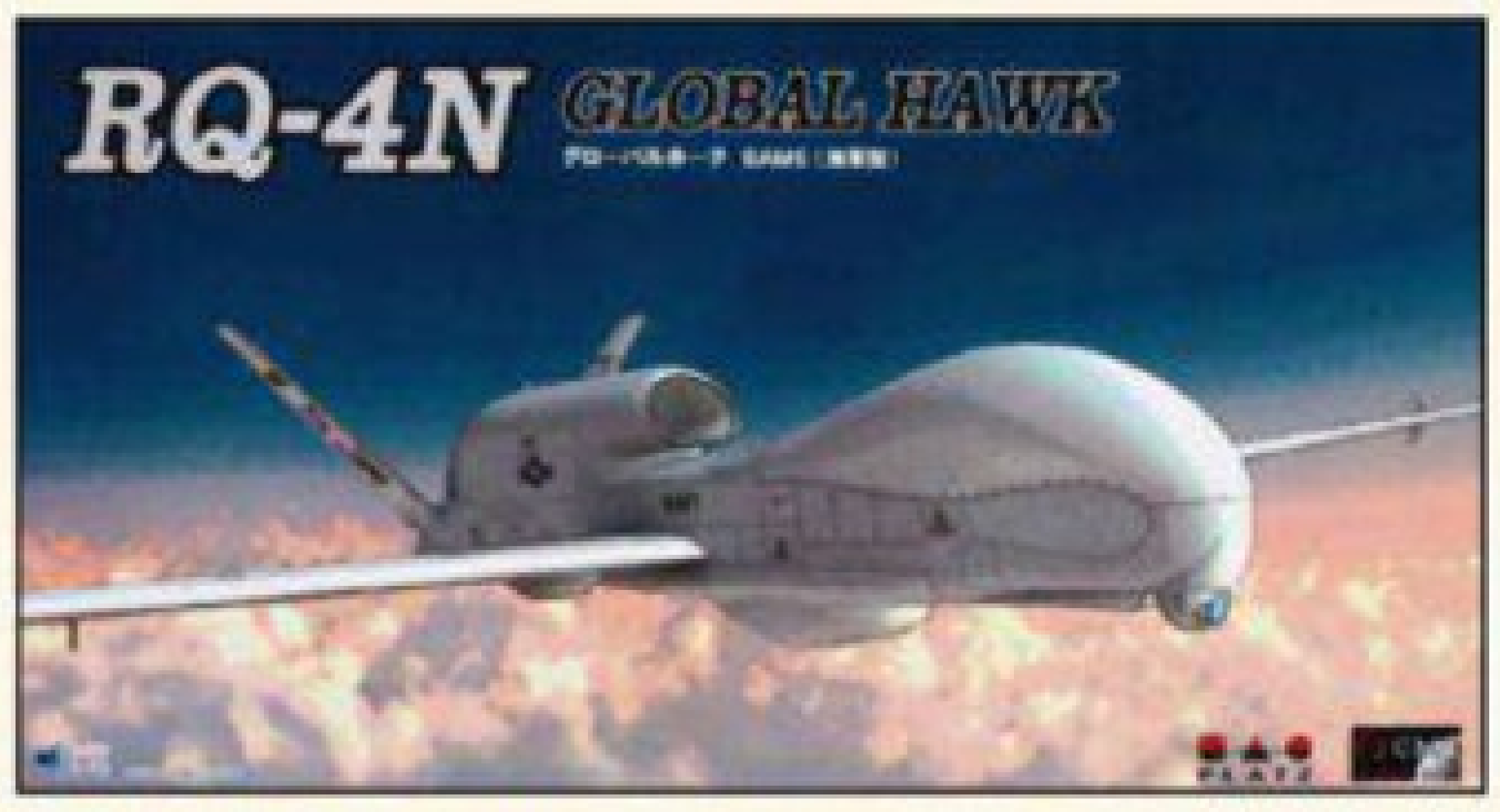
P-51D Mustang Part 1, No. BC48009, $11.95. 5 schemes with full color instruction From BarracudaCals.

Grey Ghosts Part 1 (VMS(AW)-531, VMFA-531), No. 48-006, $25. From Impact Hobby Decals.

1/72 SCALE KITS



Chinese J-20 Mighty Dragon, No. 1663, $35.95. Look for a detailed review in an upcoming issue of *FSM*. From Trumpeter, available from Stevens International.

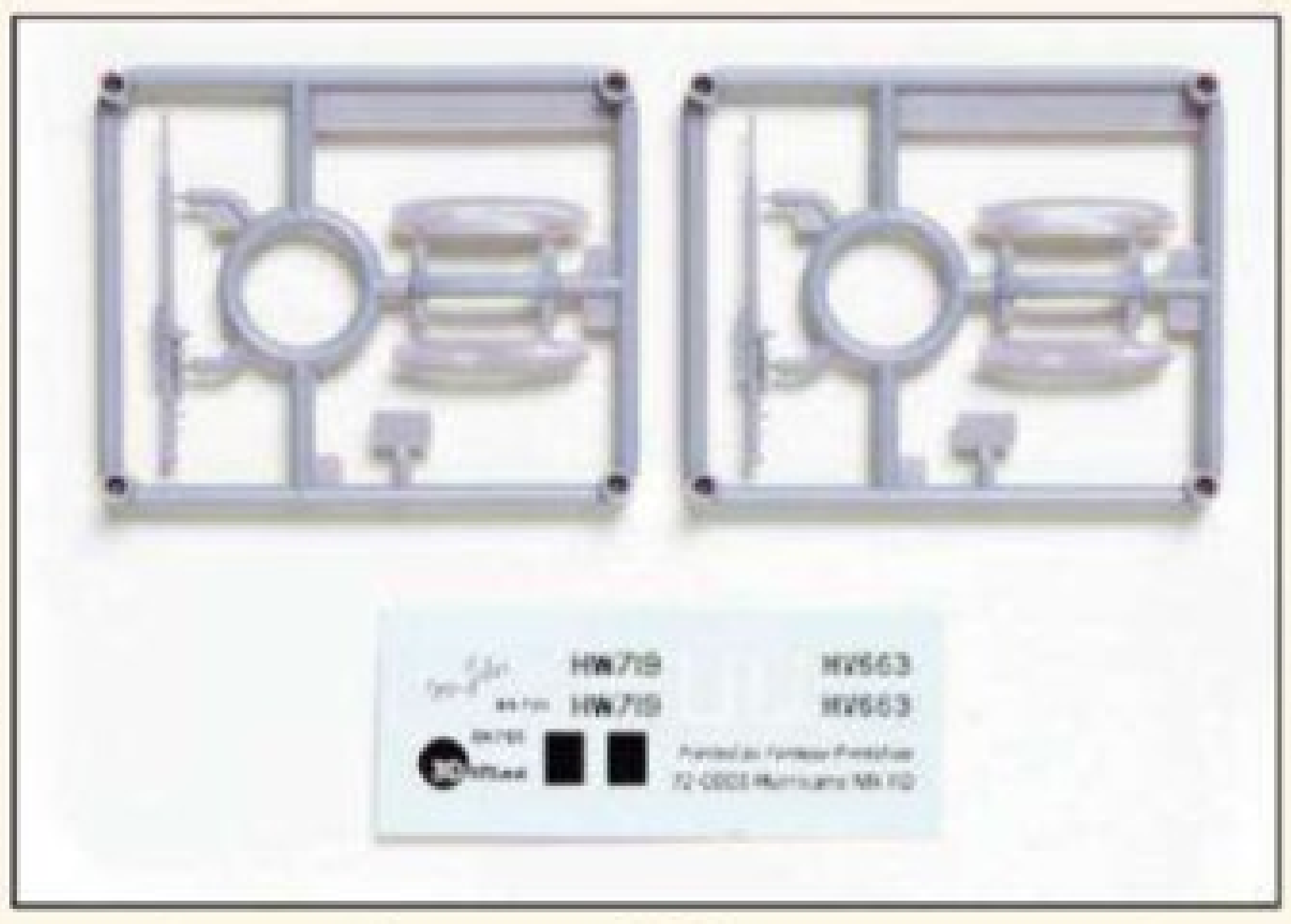


RQ-4N Global Hawk, No. AC-5-3800, $55.98. From Platz, available from Model Rectifier Corporation.

1/72 DETAIL SETS

PBY-5A Catalina landing gear (for Academy), No. 72027, $12.95. From Scale Aircraft Conversions.

EZ rigging for Monogram F4B-4, No. PE-01, $7.50. From Starfighter Decals.



Hurricane Mk.IID tank buster conversion, No. 72-C003, $9.20. From 3D-Kits.

UMD
UMD
LZLZ
P8448
P8448

Spitfire Mk.II long range conversion, No. 72-C002, $7.30. From 3D-Kits.

1/72 DECAL SETS

P-51D Mustang Part 1, No. BC72009, $9.95. 5 schemes with full color instruction. From BarracudaCals.

F4U-1 Corsair Part 1, No. BC72010, $9.95. 5 schemes with full color instruction.From BarracudaCals.

Manufacturer Directory

Aero Research Co.
6468 Valley Wood Dr.
Reno, NV 89523-1263
www.AeroResearchCDs.com

Amusing Hobby
www.perthmilitarymodelling.com/newkitnews/amusinghobby.html

BarracudaCals
P.O. Box 7448
Fremont, CA 94536
www.barracudacals.com

Dragon Models USA Inc.
1315 John Reed Ct.
City of Industry, CA 91745
626-968-0322
www.dragonmodelsusa.com

Easy Model
www.easymodel.net

Hasegawa/Great Planes Model Distributors
P.O. Box 9021
Champaign, IL 61826
800-637-7660
www.hasegawausa.com

Impact Hobby Decals
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Camby, IN 46113
317-490-3043
www.impacthobbydecals.com

Lucky Models
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Moebius Models
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New Products

1/144 SCALE KITS

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CIVIL AIRLINER
"СУХОЙ" СУПЕРДЖЕТ 100
ПАССАЖИРСКИЙ АВИАЛАЙНЕР
1/144

Sukhoi Superjet 100 civil airliner, No. 7009, $24.95. Look for a detailed review in an upcoming issue of *FSM*. From Zvezda, available from Dragon Models USA Inc.

ARMOR

1/24 SCALE KITS

ZÜNDAPP KS750
w/ SIDECAR
tasca
24

Zündapp KS750 with sidecar, No. 24-004, $57.95. From Tasca, available from Pacific Coast Models, Inc.

1/35 SCALE KITS

NEUBAUFAHRZEUG
GERMAN MULTI-TURRET TANK
Amusing

Neubaufahrzeug (Panzerkampfwagen VI Krupp Gepanzerte Ausführung), No. 35A003, $49.99. Look for a detailed review in an upcoming issue of *FSM*. From Amusing Hobby, available from www.lucky-model.com.

German Jagdpanzer E-100

German Jagdpanzer E-100 super heavy tank, No. 1596, $67.95. From Trumpeter, available from Stevens International.

German Sd.Kfz.6
Halbkettenzugmaschine Artillerieausfuhrung

German SdKfz 6 Halbkettenzugmaschine Artillerieausfuhrung (medium halftrack artillery tractor), No. 5531, $64.95. New variant. From Trumpeter, available from Stevens International.

Soviet Armoured Aerosan NKL-26

Soviet armored Aerosan NKL-26, No. 02321, $23.95. Read a detailed review on Page 65. From Trumpeter, available from Stevens International.

Russian BTR-40 APC

Russian BTR-40 APC, No. 05517, $53.99. From Trumpeter, available from Stevens International.

German Neubaufahrzeug Nr.3-5

German Neubaufahrzeug Nr.3-5, No. 05529, $67.95. From Trumpeter, available from Stevens International.

1/72 SCALE KITS

ВЕЛИКАЯ ОТЕЧЕСТВЕННАЯ WWII
ZVEZDA
1/72
SOVIET RECONNAISSANCE TEAM
СОВЕТСКИЕ РАЗВЕДЧИКИ
1941-1943

Soviet reconnaissance team 1941-1943, No. 6137, $4.95. From Zvezda, available from Dragon Models USA Inc.

1/100 SCALE KITS

ВЕЛИКАЯ ОТЕЧЕСТВЕННАЯ WWII
ZVEZDA
1/100
GERMAN LIGHT TANK
НЕМЕЦКИЙ ЛЕГКИЙ ТАНК
PZ.KPFW.38 (T)

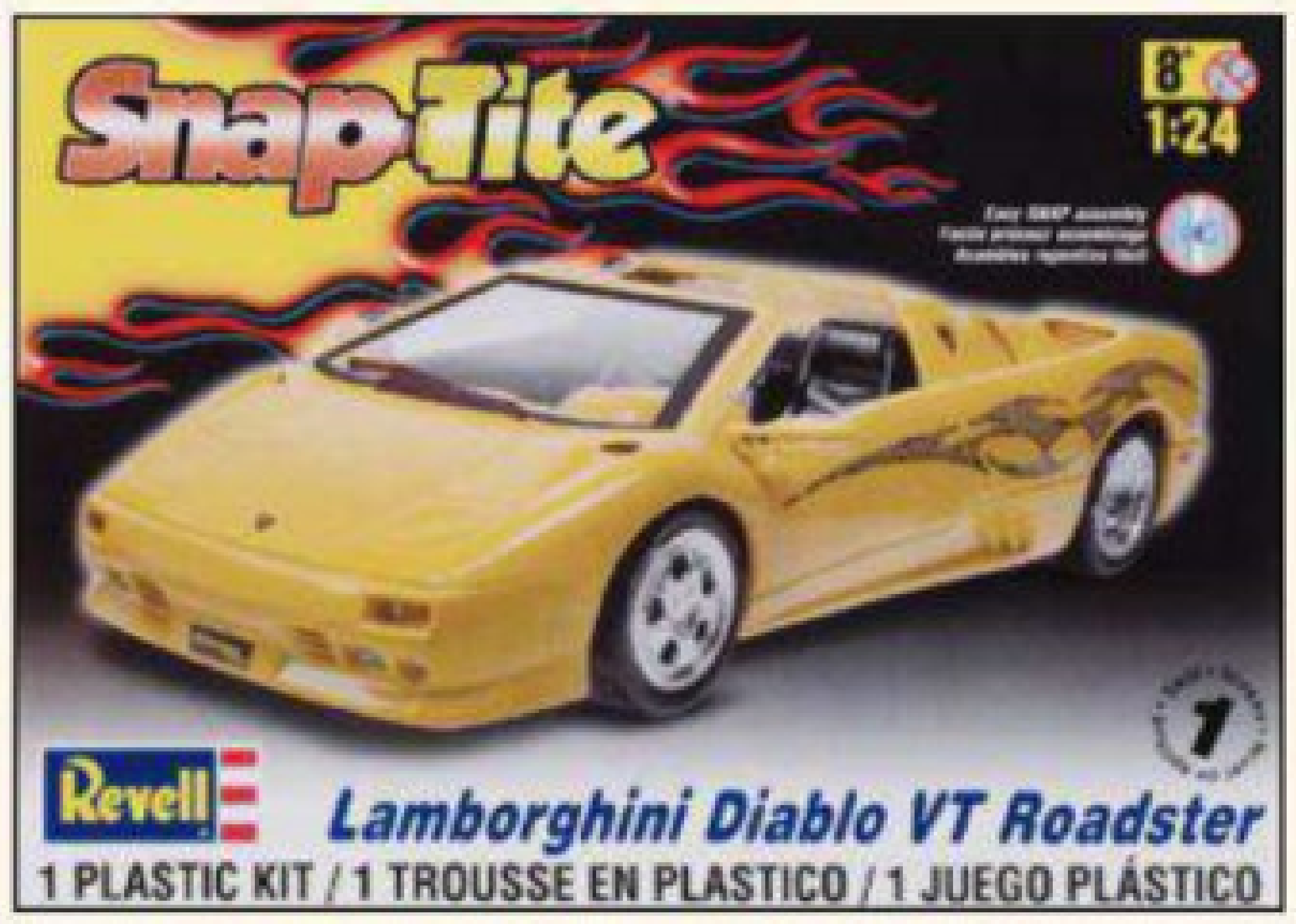
German light tank PzKfpw 38(t), No. 6130, $4.95. From Zvezda, available from Dragon Models USA Inc.

www.FineScale.com

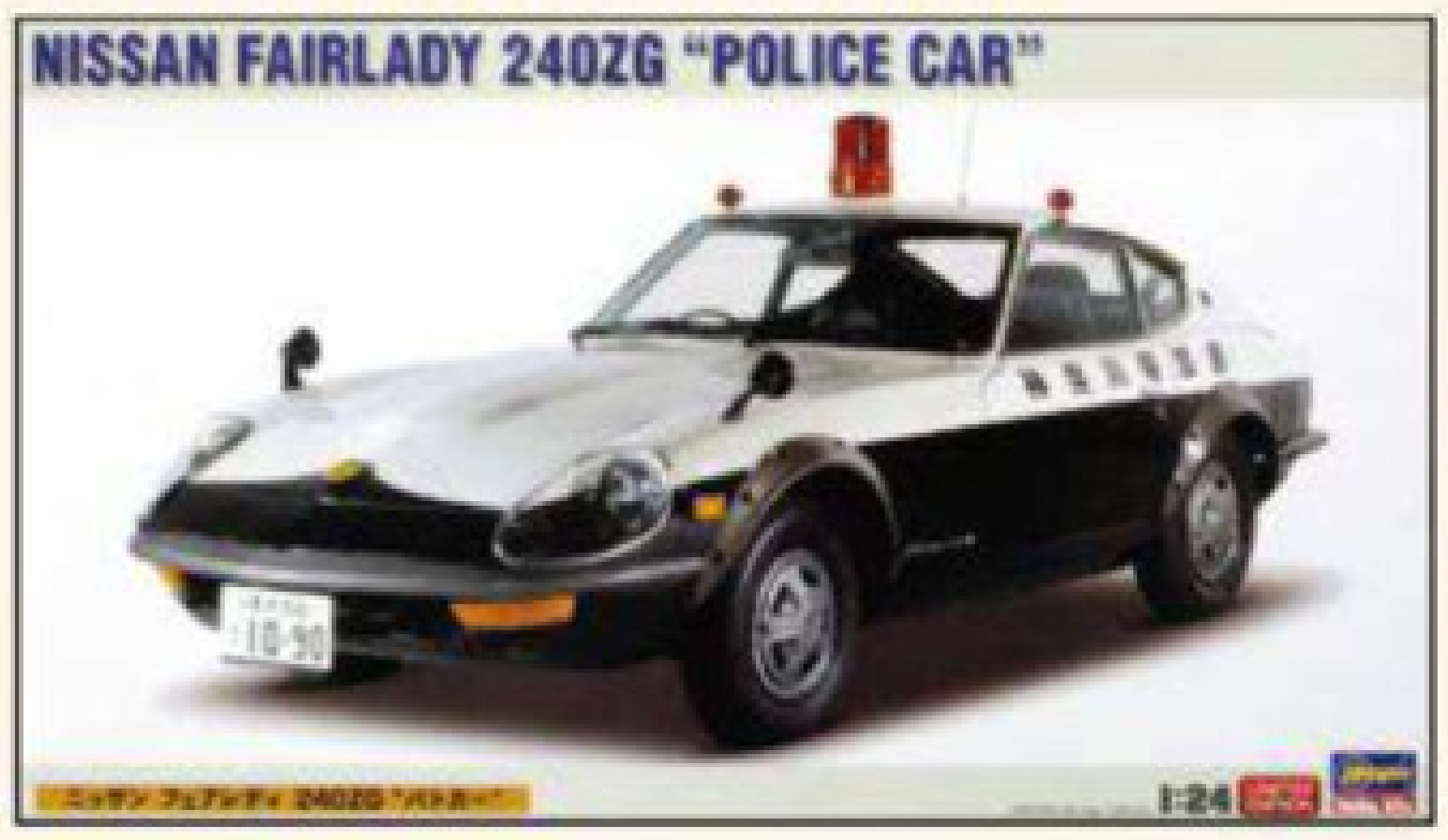
FineScale Modeler *magazine receives new products from a variety of manufacturers on a daily basis and we are now able to share all of them with you through our interactive exclusive FSM product database. Click on the Product News link at www.FineScale.com.*

AUTOS

1/24 SCALE KITS


Snap Tite
1:24
Revell
Lamborghini Diablo VT Roadster
1 PLASTIC KIT / 1 TROUSSE EN PLASTICO / 1 JUEGO PLÁSTICO

Lamborghini Diablo VT Roadster, No. 85-1966, $15.95. From Revell.


NISSAN FAIRLADY 240ZG "POLICE CAR"
1:24

Nissan Fairlady police car, No. 20250, $49.99. From Hasegawa/Great Planes Model Distributors.

1/25 SCALE KITS

65 Ford Falcon
Ranchero pickup,stock plus

1965 Ford Falcon Ranchero pickup, No. 2511, $54.95. From Trumpeter, available from Stevens International.

California WHEELS
'59 Chevy Impala
Convertible 2'n1
1:25
Revell
1 PLASTIC KIT / 1 KIT EN PLASTIQUE / 1 KIT PLÁSTICO

1959 Chevy Impala convertible 2 n' 1, No. 85-4944, $24.94. From Revell.

Special Edition
'48 Ford Custom Coupe 3'n1
1:25
Revell
1 PLASTIC KIT / 1 KIT EN PLASTIQUE / 1 KIT PLÁSTICO

1948 Ford Custom Coupe 3 n' 1, No. 85-4253, $26.95. From Revell.

Snap Tite
1:25
Revell
'63 Corvette Sting Ray Coupe
1 PLASTIC KIT / 1 KIT EN PLASTIQUE / 1 KIT PLÁSTICO

1963 Corvette Sting Ray Coupe Snap Tite, No. 85-1968, $15.95. From Revell.

MILITARY FIGURES

28MM SCALE KITS

VICTRIX
AUSTRIAN NAPOLEONIC INFANTRY
1798-1809
The Napoleonic Wars

Austrian Napoleonic infantry 1798-1809, No. VX0012, $34. From Victrix Ltd.

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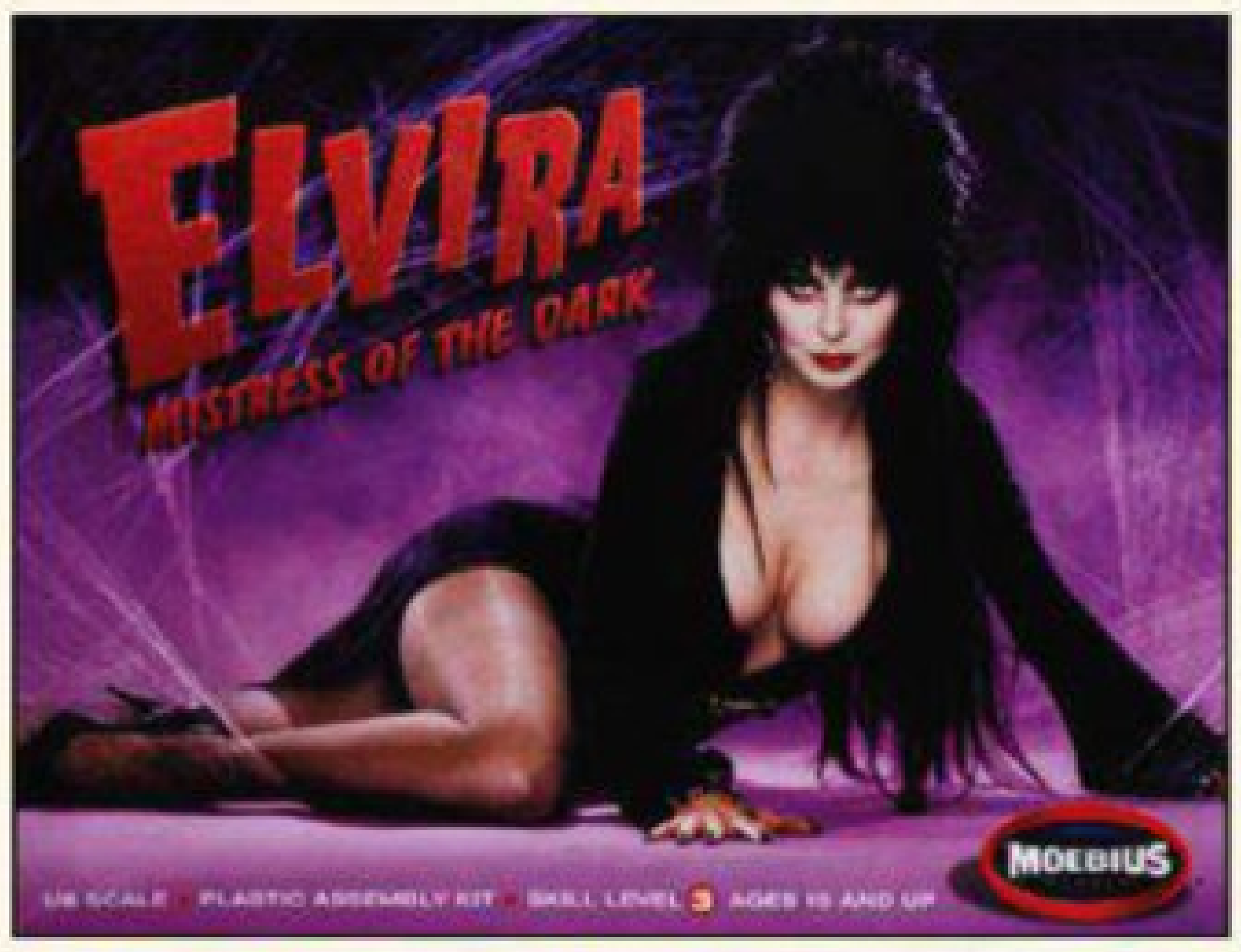
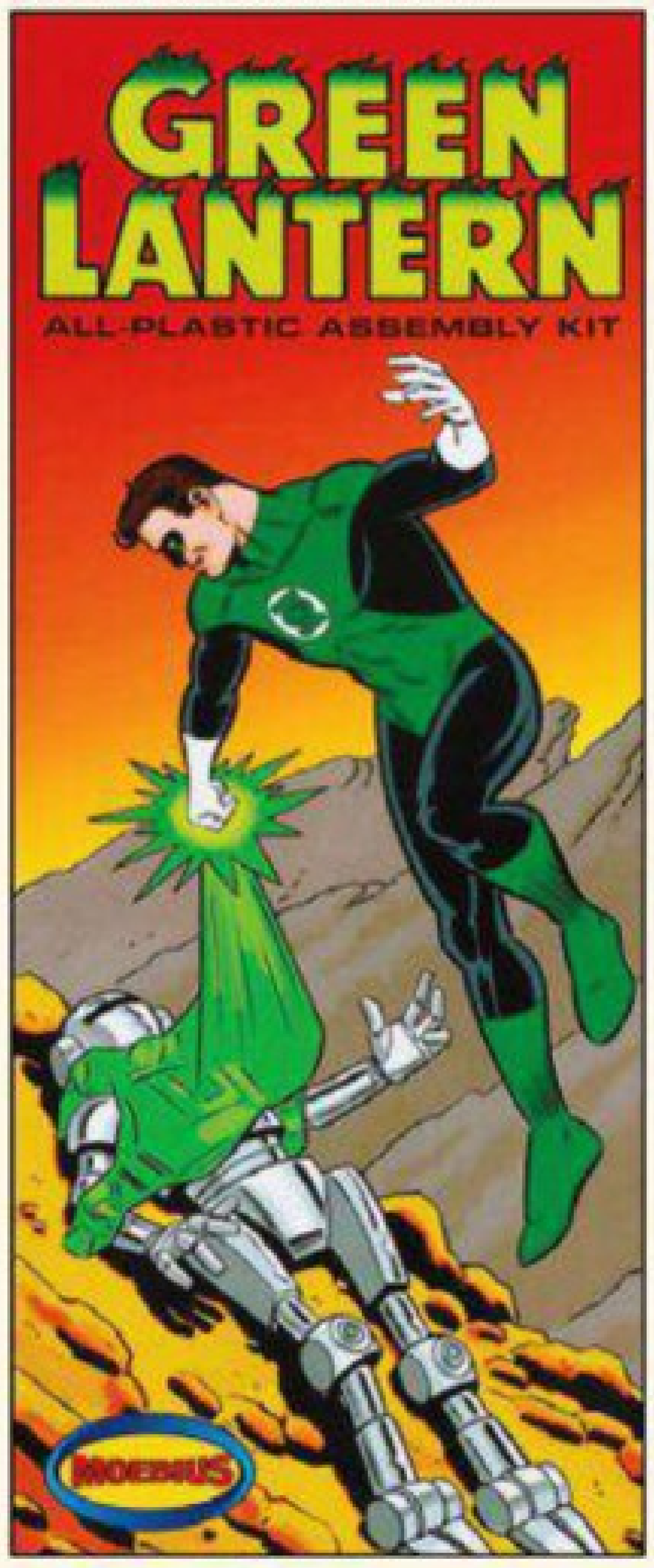
FANTASY FIGURES

1/8 SCALE KITS


ELVIRA
MISTRESS OF THE DARK
MOEBIUS

Elvira - Mistress of the Dark, No. 918, $34.99. From Moebius Models.

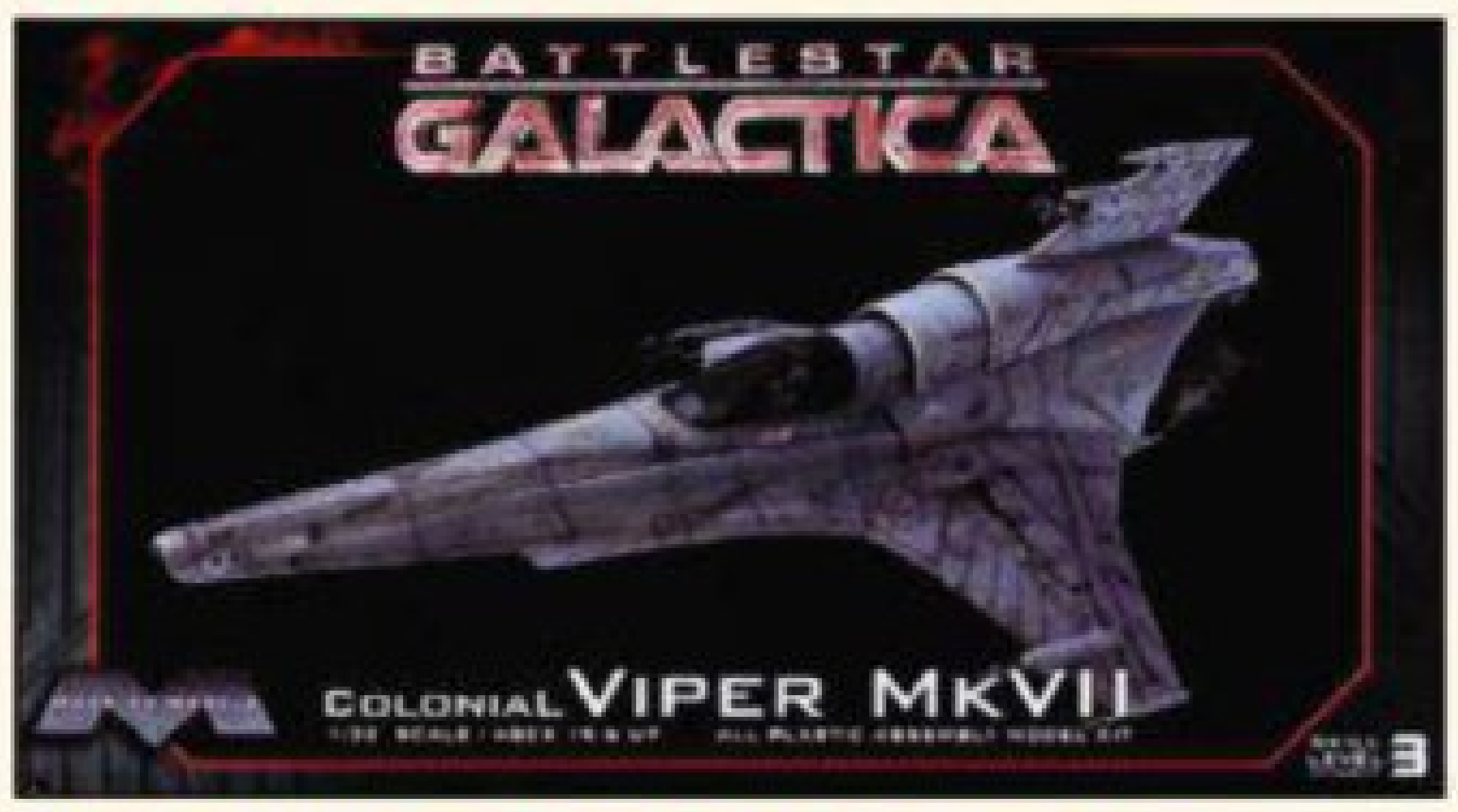
OTHER SCALE KITS


GREEN LANTERN
ALL-PLASTIC ASSEMBLY KIT
MOEBIUS

Green Lantern, No. 924, $29.99. From Moebius Models.

SCI-FI

1/32 SCALE KITS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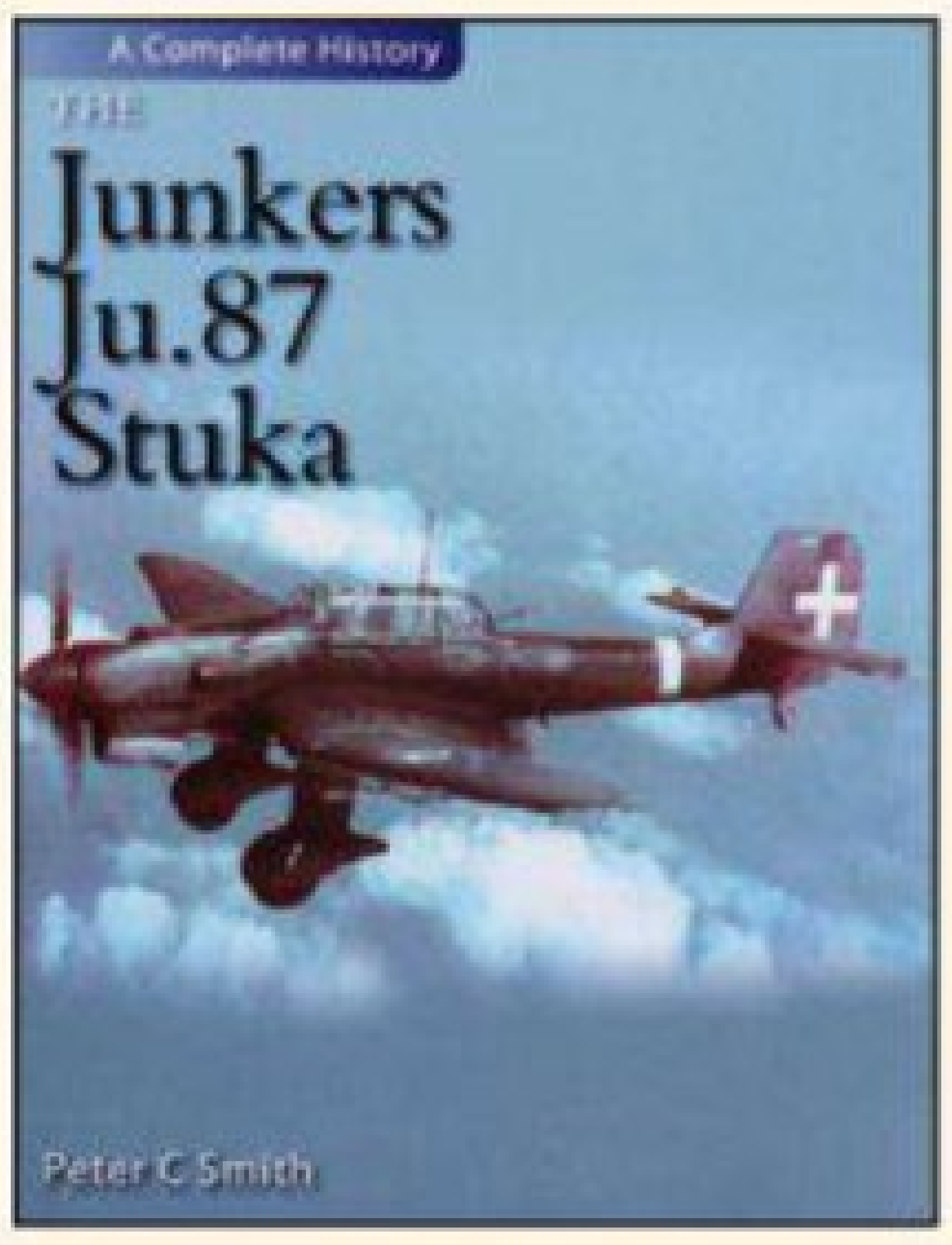
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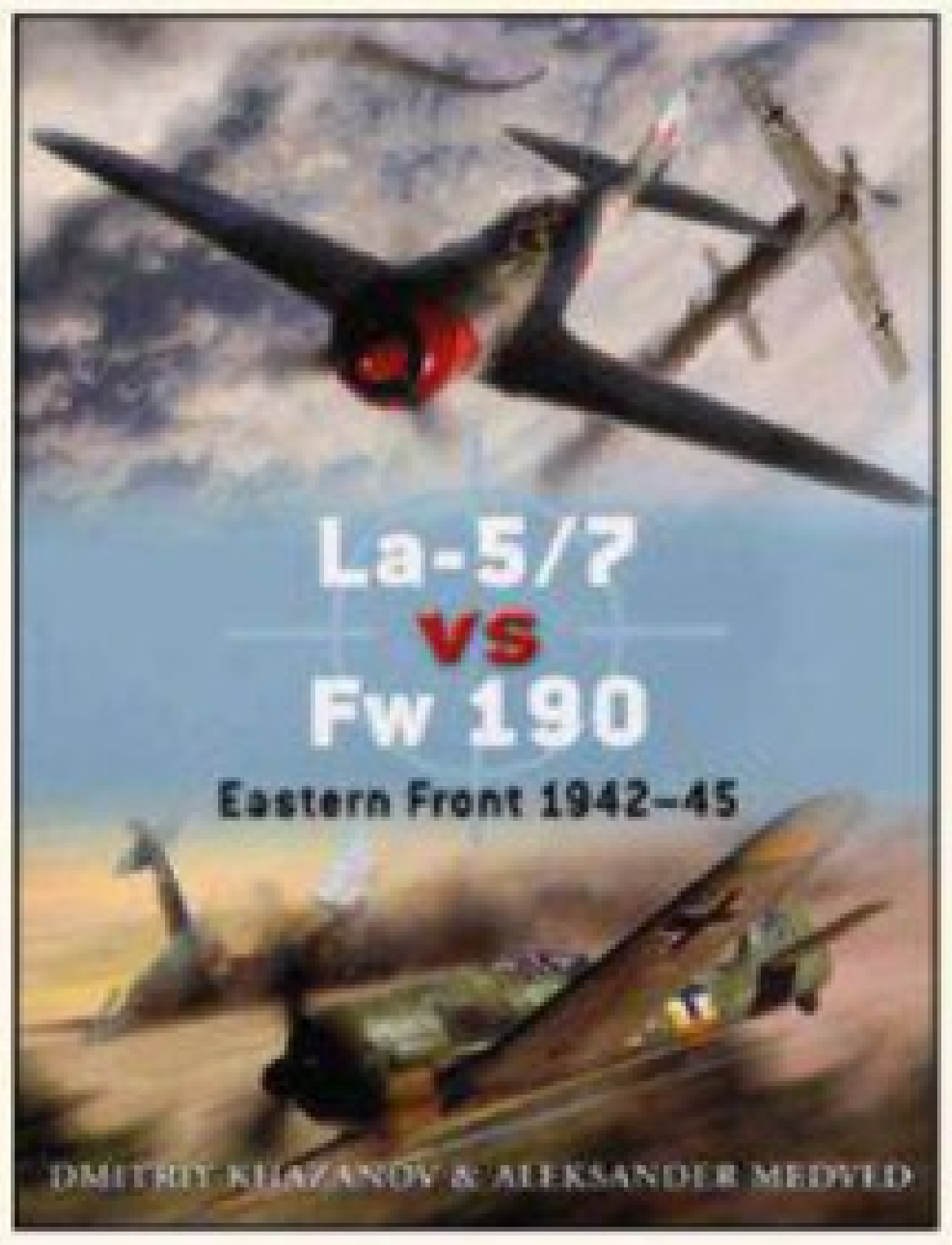
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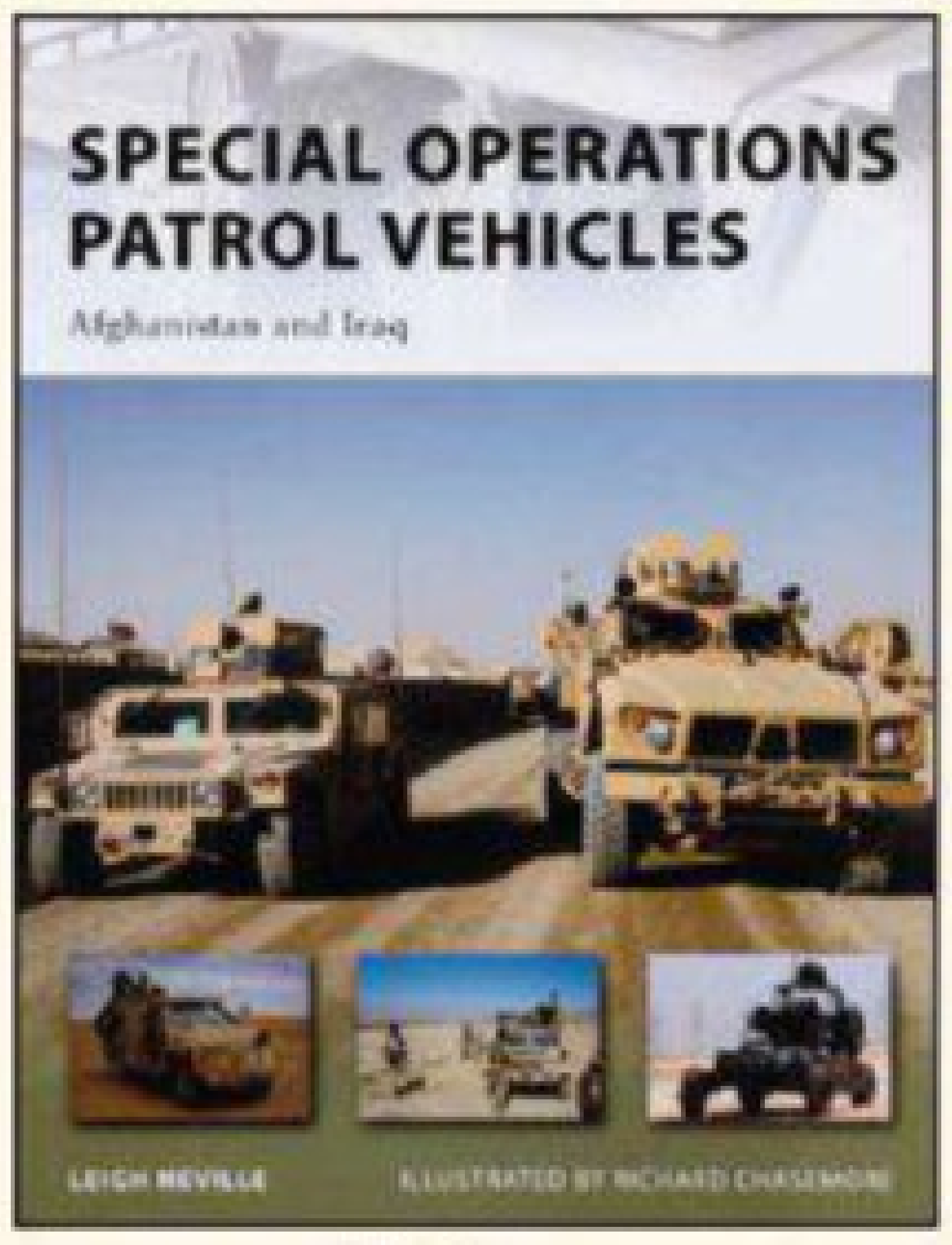
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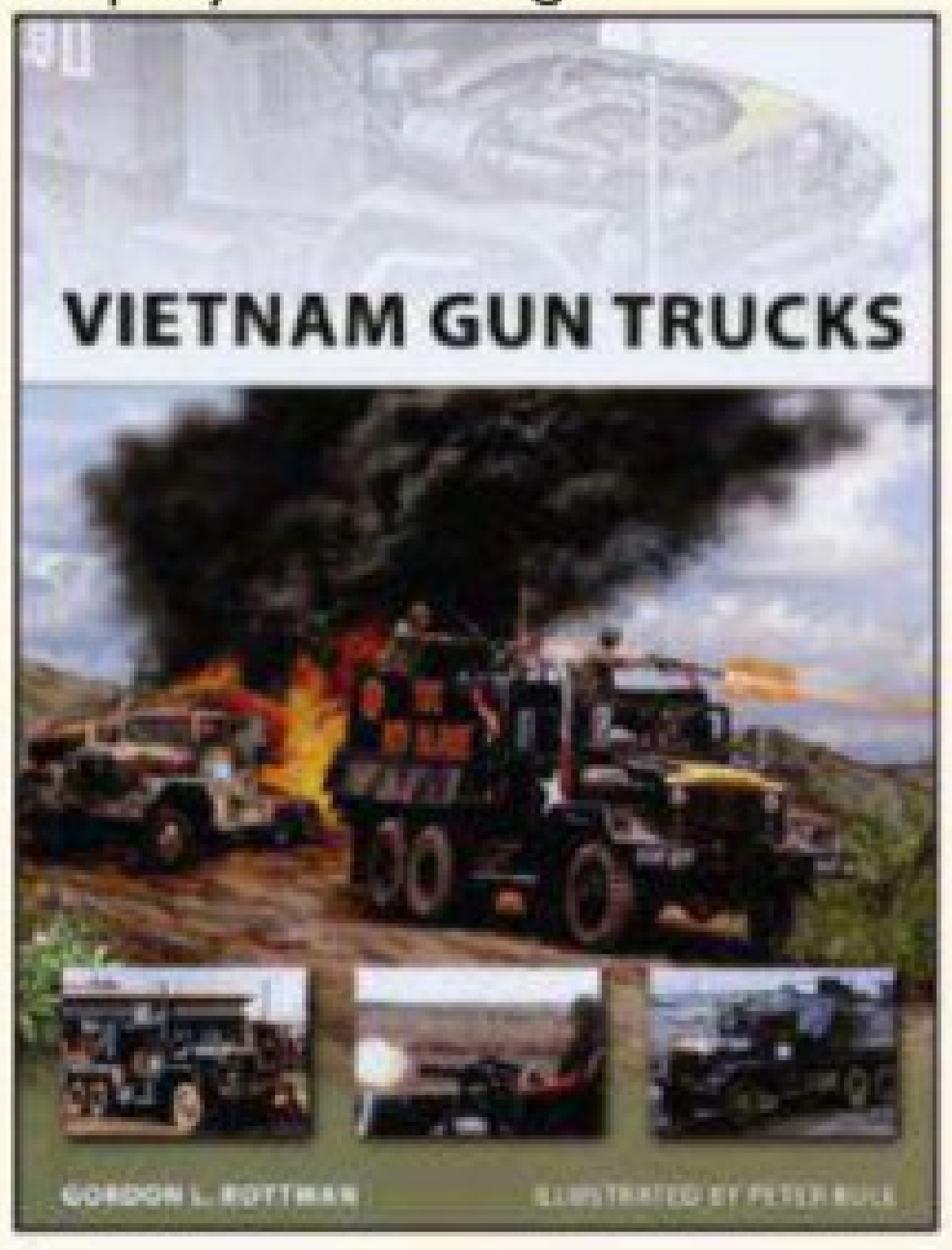
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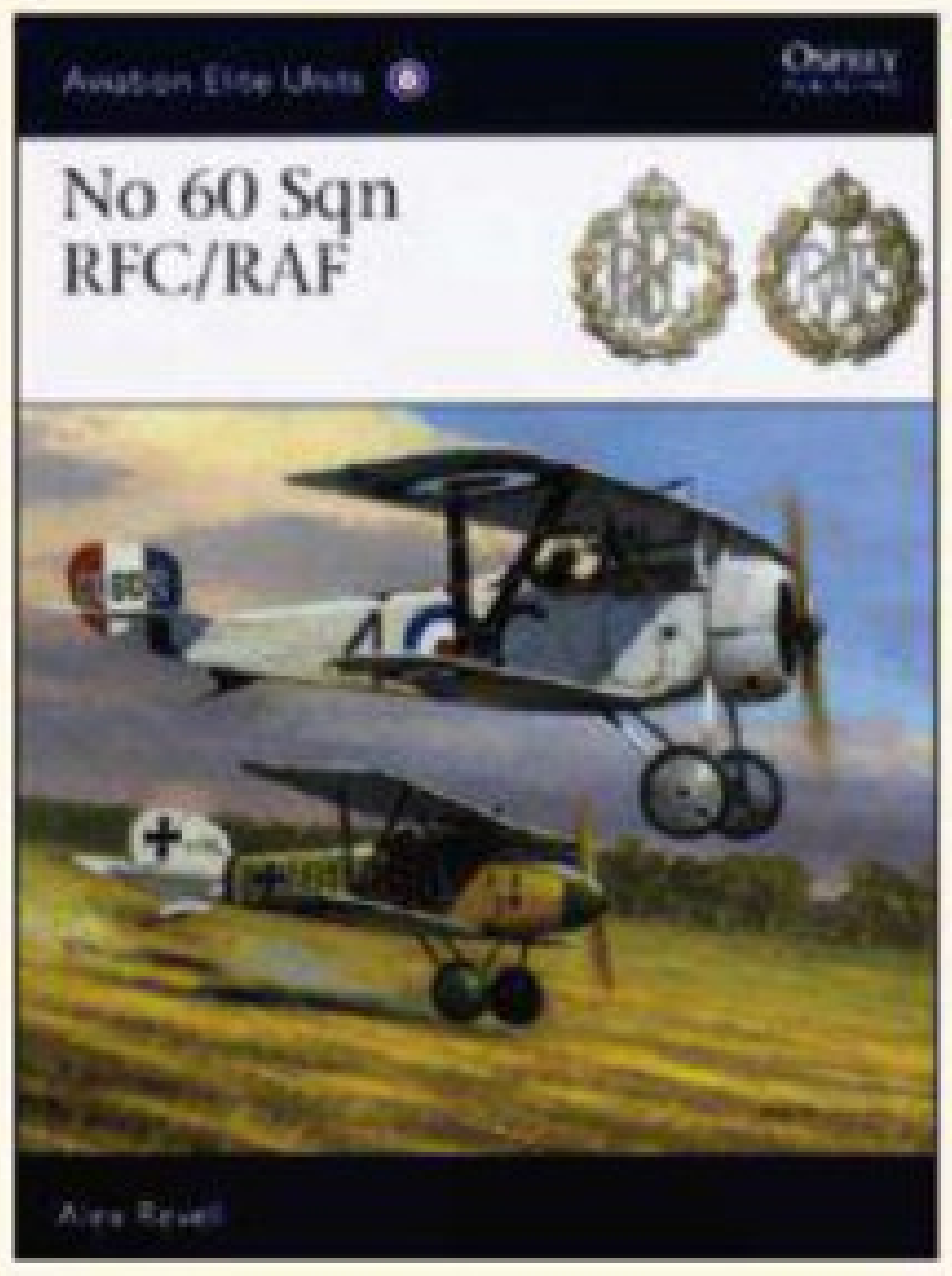
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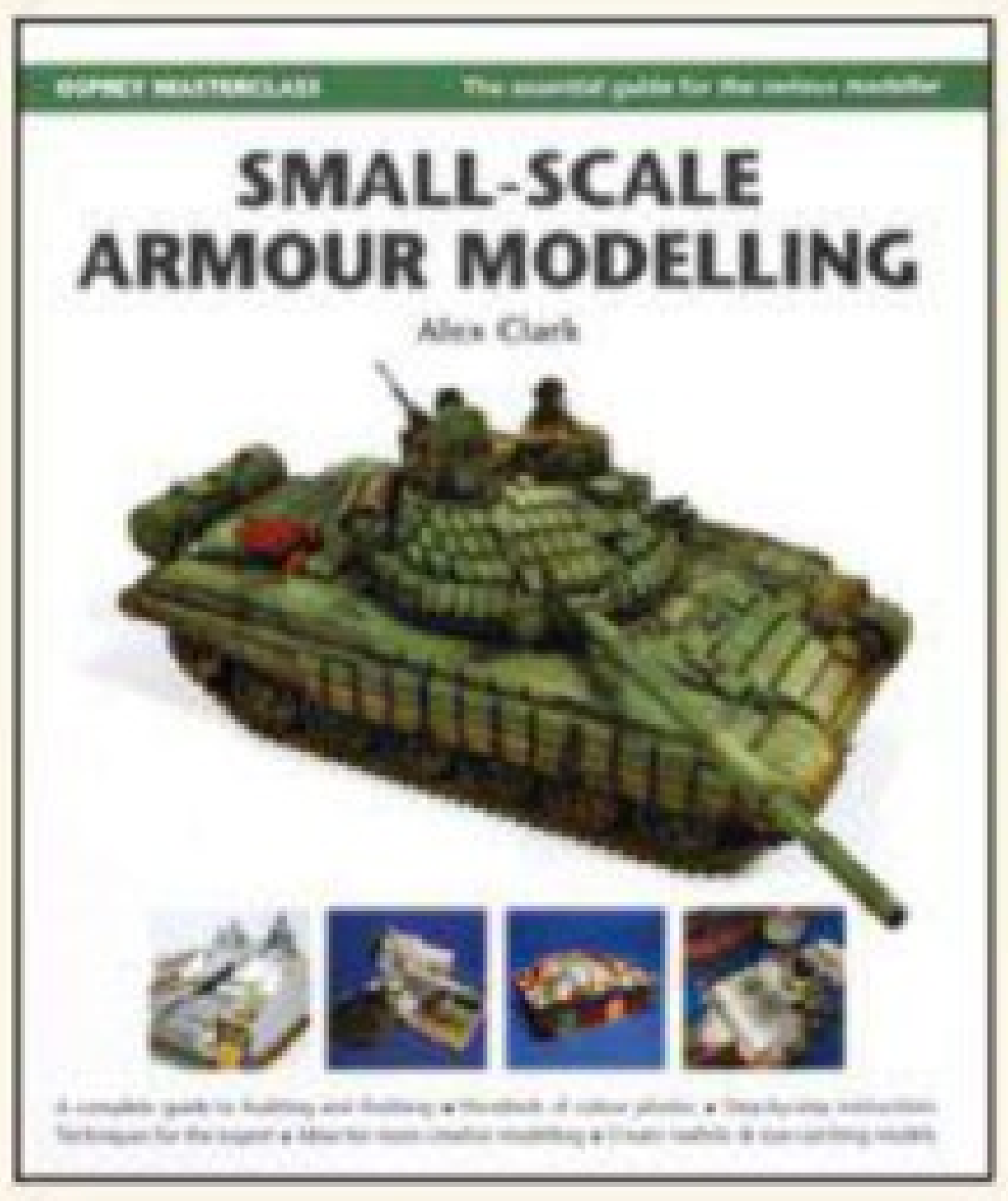
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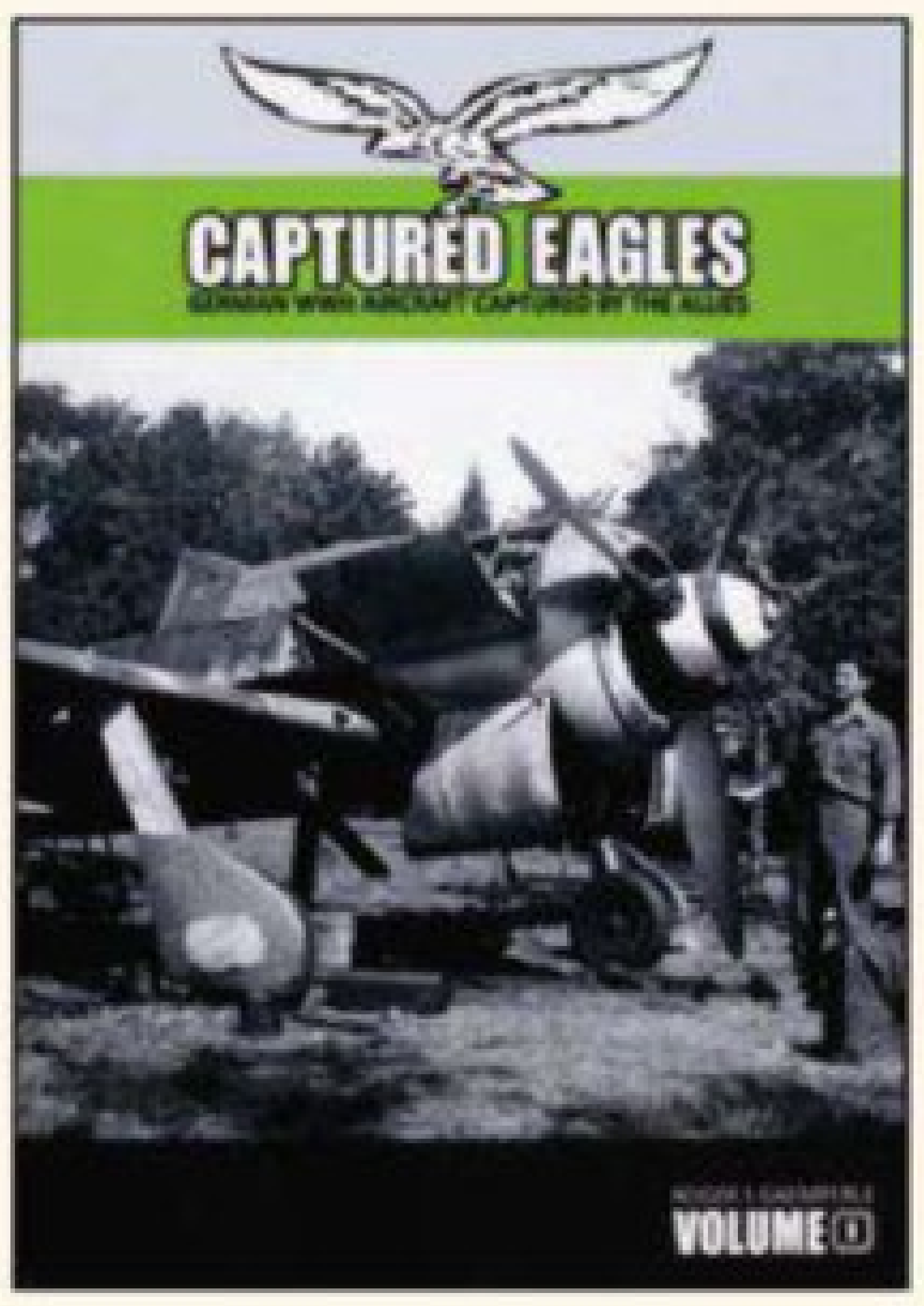

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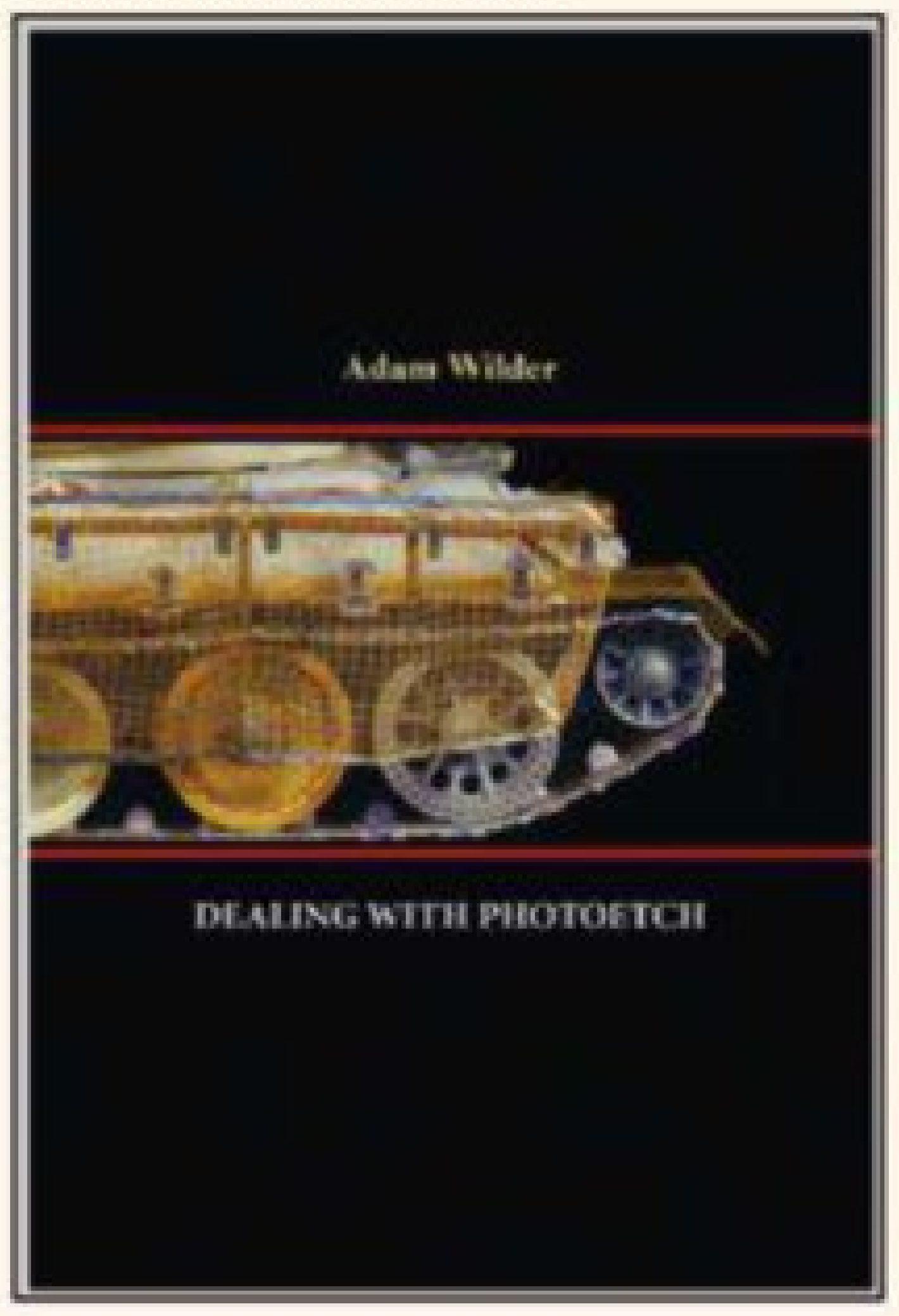

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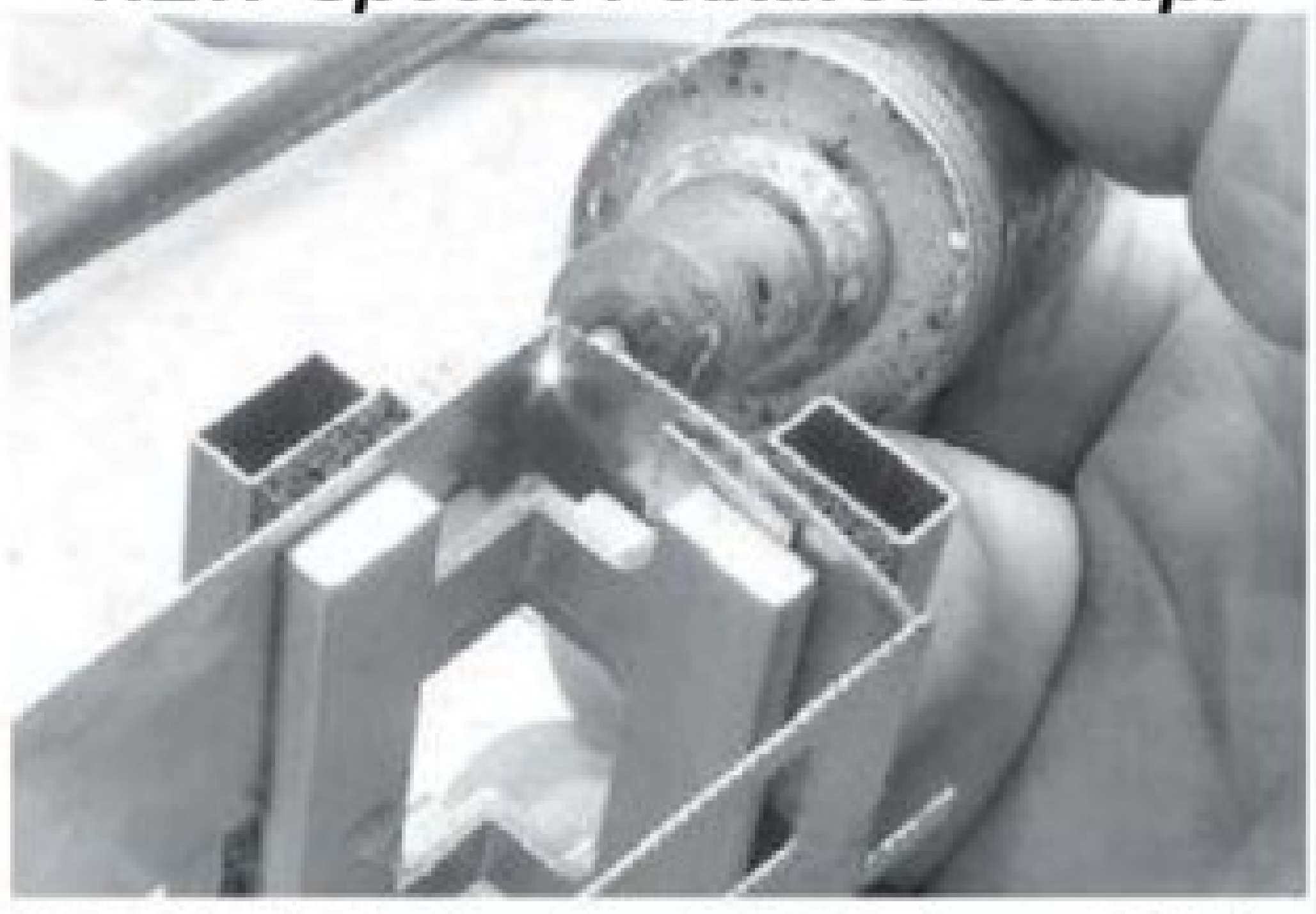
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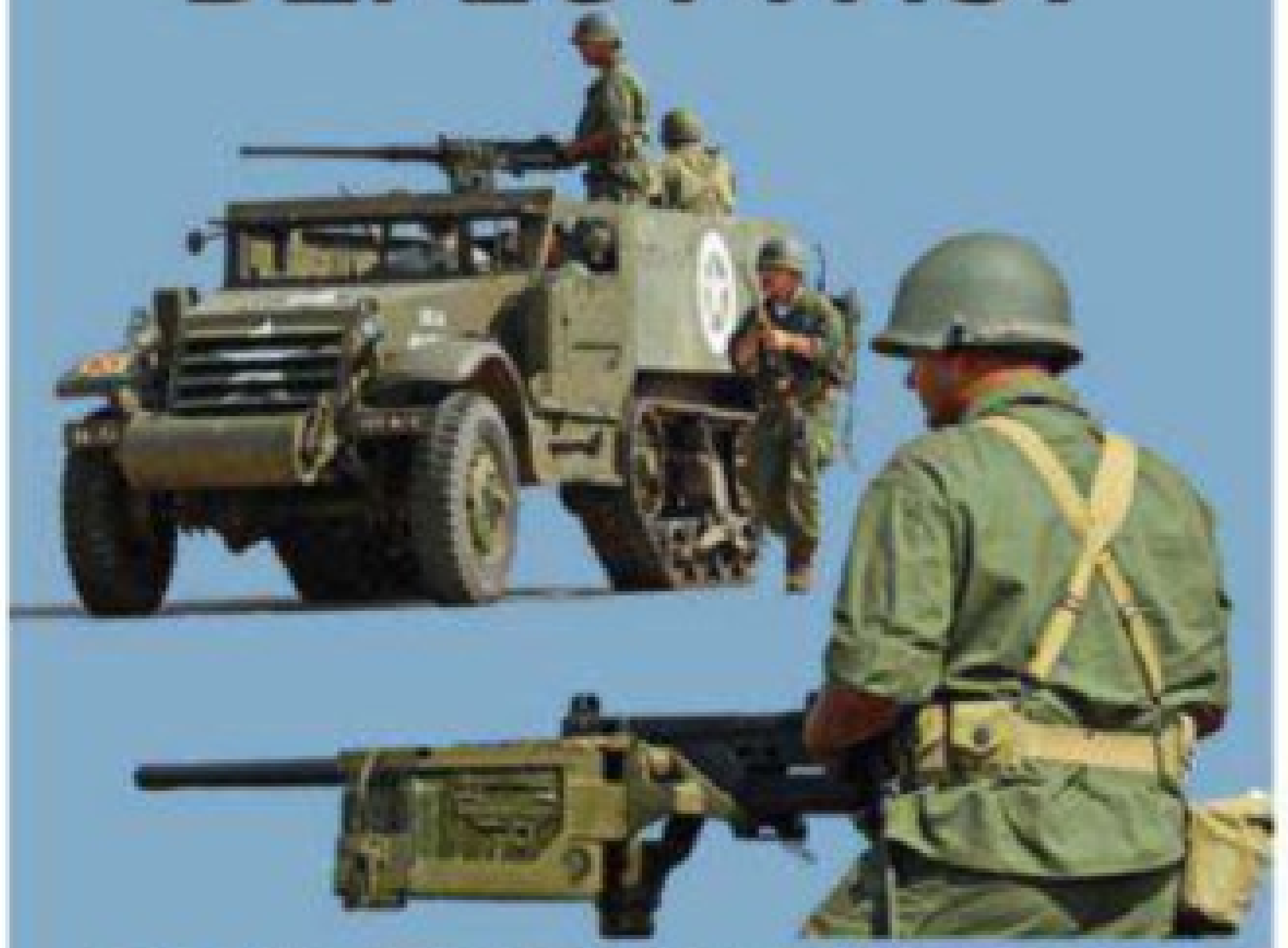
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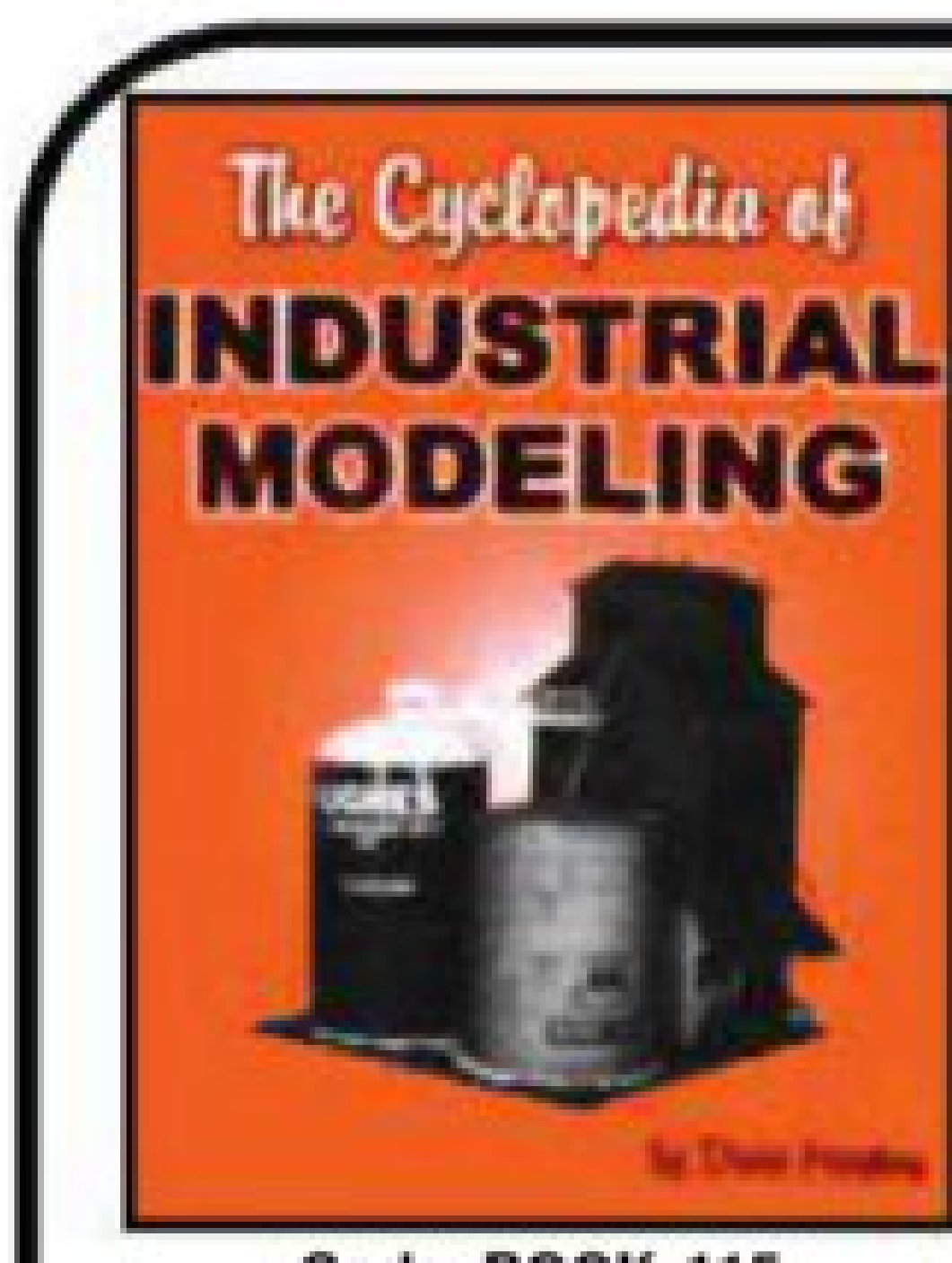
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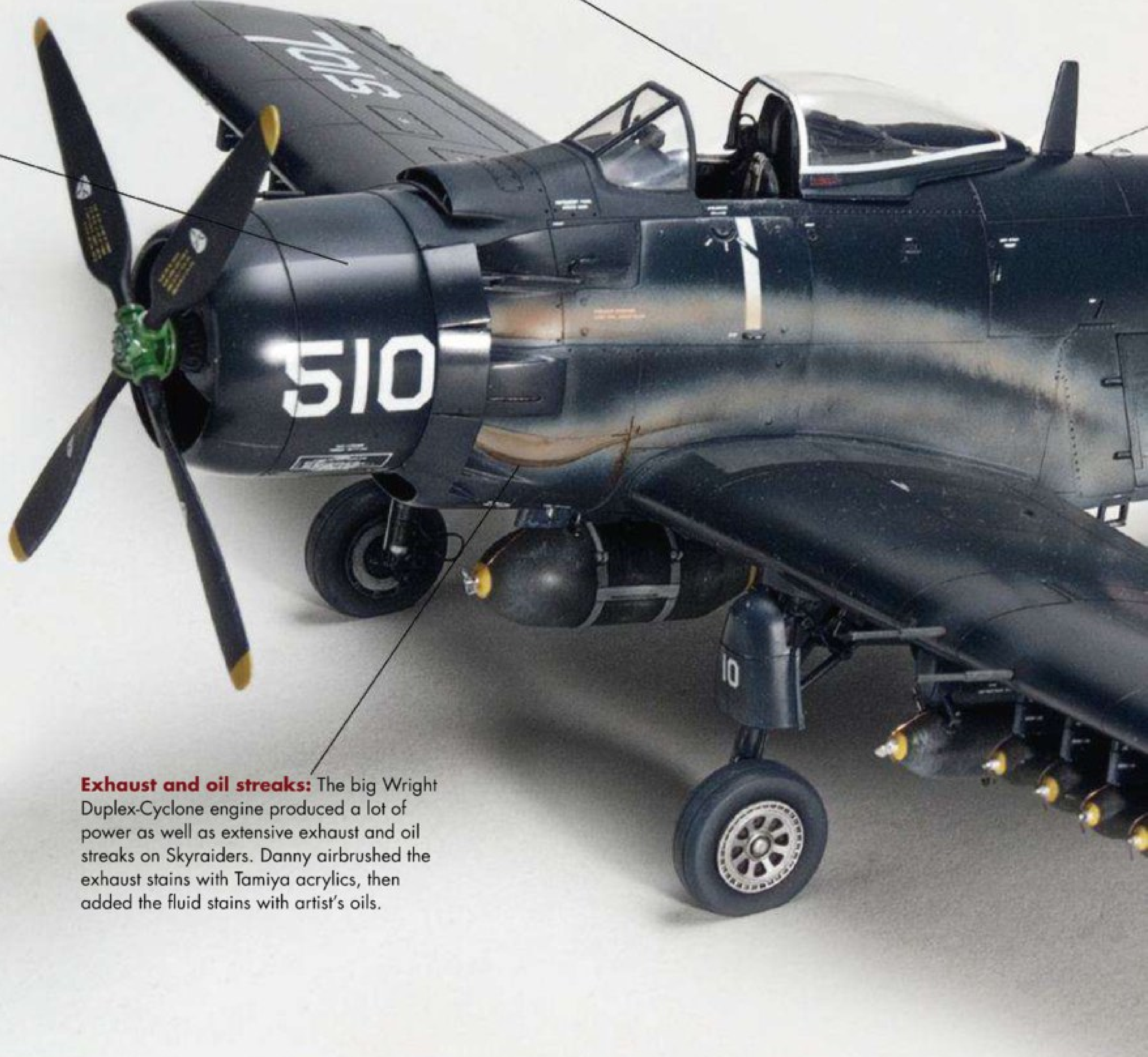
Airbrushing and weather

Sea blue gloss and exhaust streaks key a Korean War attacker • BY AARON SKINNER



Cockpit: Much of the conversion's focus was in the front office. Danny combined parts from several aftermarket sets with scratchbuilding to reproduce the AD-4B cockpit and instrument panel.

Sea blue gloss: After a coat of Vallejo sea blue, Danny airbrushed layers of Polly Scale clear gloss, wet-sanding between each with Micro-Mesh sandpaper to achieve a blemish-free finish.

The Douglas Skyraider is best known for service in the Vietnam War, but the aircraft was used extensively in Korea, too. Danny backdated Tamiya's 1/48 scale kit and applied classic sea blue camouflage to build an AD-4B.

Exhaust and oil streaks: The big Wright Duplex-Cyclone engine produced a lot of power as well as extensive exhaust and oil streaks on Skyraiders. Danny airbrushed the exhaust stains with Tamiya acrylics, then added the fluid stains with artist's oils.

Danny Lauderdale has always liked the Douglas Skyraider, especially in the overall dark blue schemes of the 1950s. When he wanted to build one in 1/48 scale, that meant backdating Tamiya's A-1H to an AD-4B.

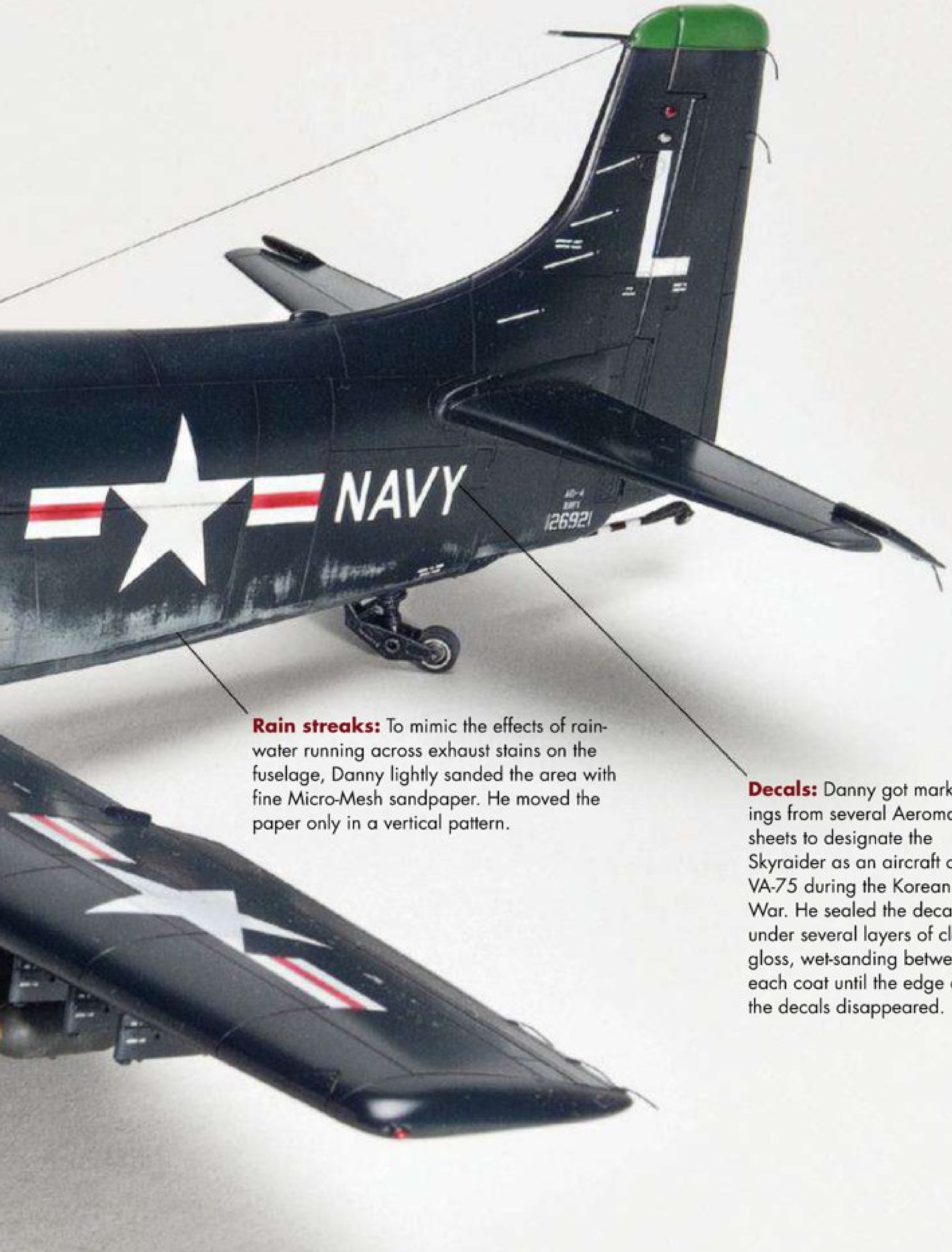
The extensive list of modifications includes: replacing the antennas and removing the tail beacon; installing modified Cutting Edge weapons racks; cutting out and repositioning the elevators; adding static wicks; adding wires and plumbing to the engine; adding Eduard photoetched-metal and scratchbuilt detail to the wheel wells; and scratchbuilding detail for the landing gear and bomb racks.

Danny replaced the cockpit with a combination of KMC, Eduard, and Cutting Edge parts, and a scratchbuilt rear bulkhead.

After pre-shading with Tamiya acrylic gloss black, Danny airbrushed the model with Vallejo Aircraft Colors sea blue gloss. He used an Iwata HP-C at 18–20psi and thinned the paints "way down" — 1 part paint with 3 parts thinner. He uses Tamiya acrylic thinner with a few drops of Winsor & Newton blending medium to slow drying time.

"Once the finish coat was complete, I applied Polly Scale acrylic gloss clear over the entire model," Danny says. After 24 hours, he wet-sanded the surface with Micro-Mesh sandpaper, starting with 2400-grit and progressing to 12000-grit. The water helps remove residue that might

ing a Skyraider



Rain streaks: To mimic the effects of rainwater running across exhaust stains on the fuselage, Danny lightly sanded the area with fine Micro-Mesh sandpaper. He moved the paper only in a vertical pattern.

Decals: Danny got markings from several Aeromaster sheets to designate the Skyraider as an aircraft of VA-75 during the Korean War. He sealed the decals under several layers of clear gloss, wet-sanding between each coat until the edge of the decals disappeared.

Meet Danny Lauderdale

DANNY, 52, is an aircraft maintenance technician for American Airlines in Tulsa, Okla. A lifelong modeler, the first model he remembers building was Monogram's 1/48 scale T-28 Trojan, which he attempted to build when he was 6. "My brothers and I would buy models at the local variety store," Danny says. "When we moved to Tulsa, I had my mom take me to one of the local hobby shops — at that time there were quite a few." He builds mostly aircraft (aviation has always been an interest), but admits to having a few armor kits in his stash. Danny lives in Tulsa with his wife and four children and is a member of the Historical Miniatures Society of Northeast Oklahoma.

www.FineScale.com

For more photos and views of Danny's terrific Skyraider, visit us at www.FineScale.com and see our "Online Extras."

scratch or damage the surface of the paint.

He repainted damaged areas, then reapplied clear gloss and sanded again until the finish was glass smooth.

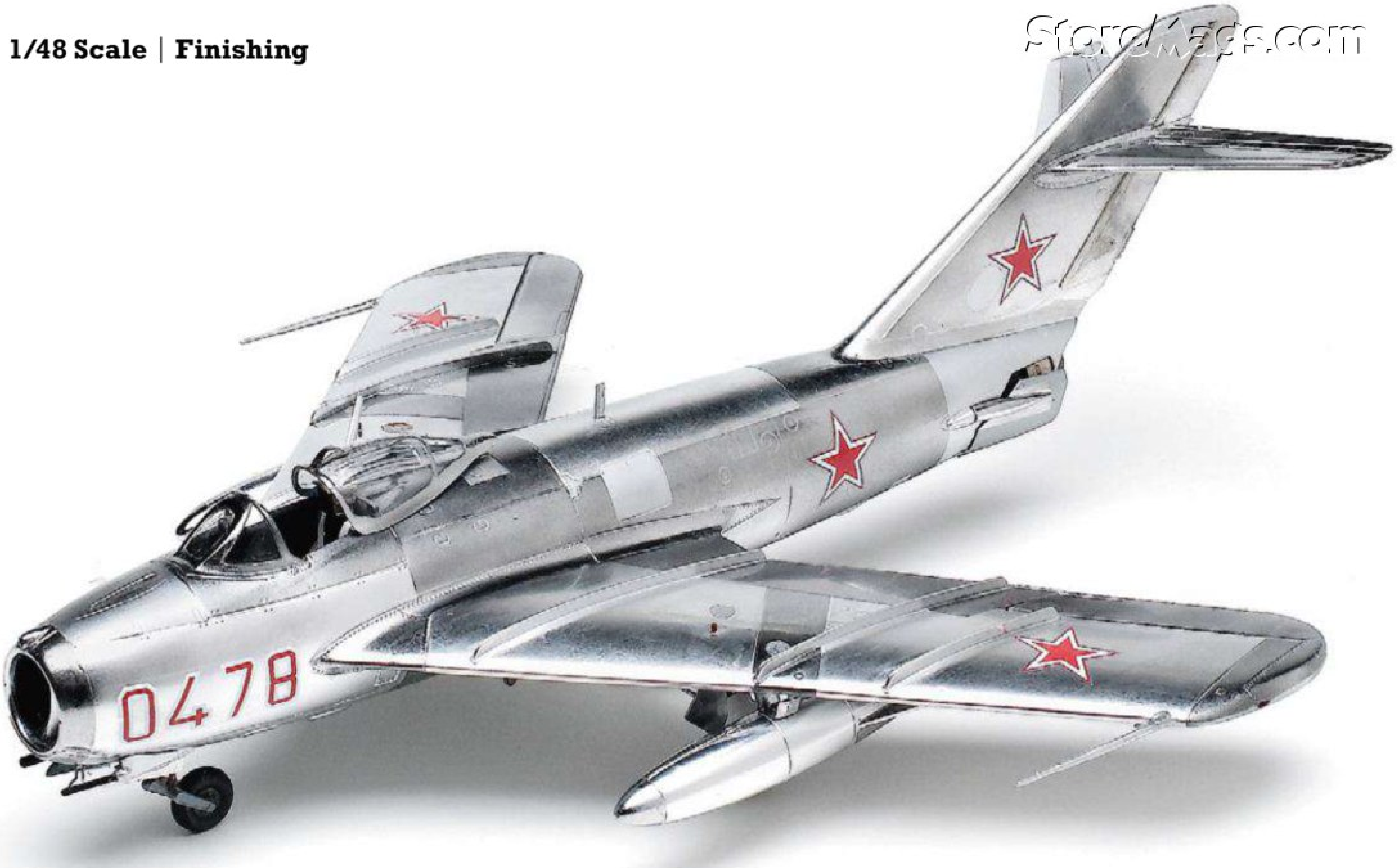
"Another tip that I found useful for a smooth finish was to use a tack cloth just before applying the next coat," Danny says. "This is especially important when applying your final clear coat."

Danny applied decals next — markings for VA-75 aboard USS *Bon Homme Richard* in 1952, pieced together from several Aeromaster sheets — then applied more Polly Scale gloss and sanded the surface until everything was smooth and the edge of the decal film was no longer visible.

The final finish was Polly Scale acrylic semigloss clear, thinned about 75 percent with water and applied in light coats to the desired finish. "The (previous) Micro-Mesh steps … gave it an extremely smooth finish," Danny says.

He applied the Skyraider's conspicuous exhaust streaks freehand with his Iwata airbrush using Tamiya acrylics — tan, buff, etc. "I had good photographic references to look at to get this as accurate as possible," he says. Then, he sanded the sides of the fuselage vertically with Micro-Mesh sandpaper to create rain streaking.

Guided by photos, he added oil streaks and stains with artist's oils, and chipped the paint with a combination of Tamiya acrylic flat aluminum and a silver Prismacolor pencil. Time consuming but definitely worth it, says Danny of his finishing technique. **FSM**



| COVER STORY |

Soviet Cold War MiGs almost always went naked. Aaron finished HobbyBoss' 1/48 scale model with Alclad II and Testors Metalizers.

MAKING the most of METALLICS for a MiG

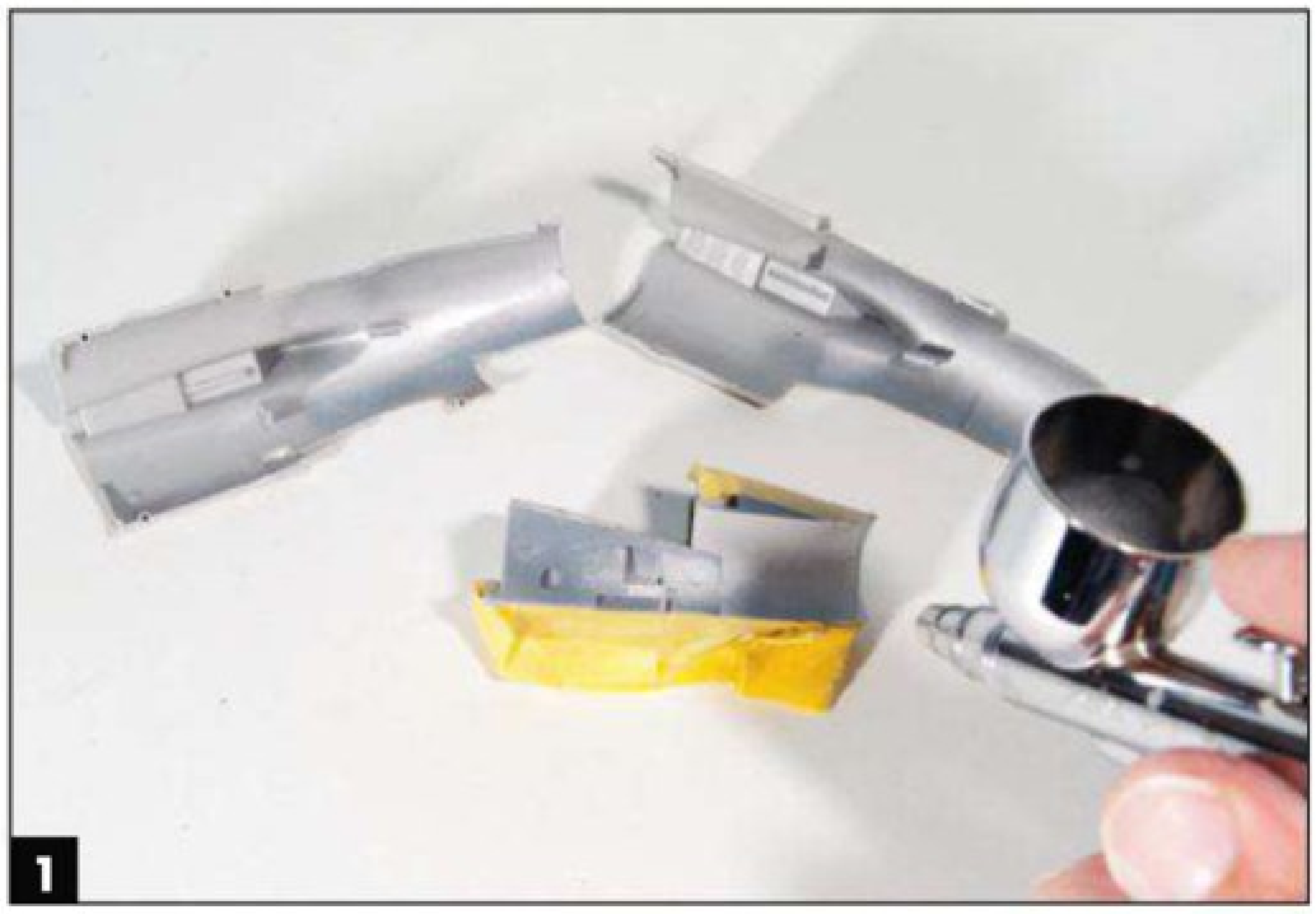
Taking a shine to a Cold War fighter

BY AARON SKINNER

There are few modeling challenges I used to dread more than natural metal. For years, I went out of my way to build camouflaged aircraft and avoid the disappointment of failed metallic finishes.

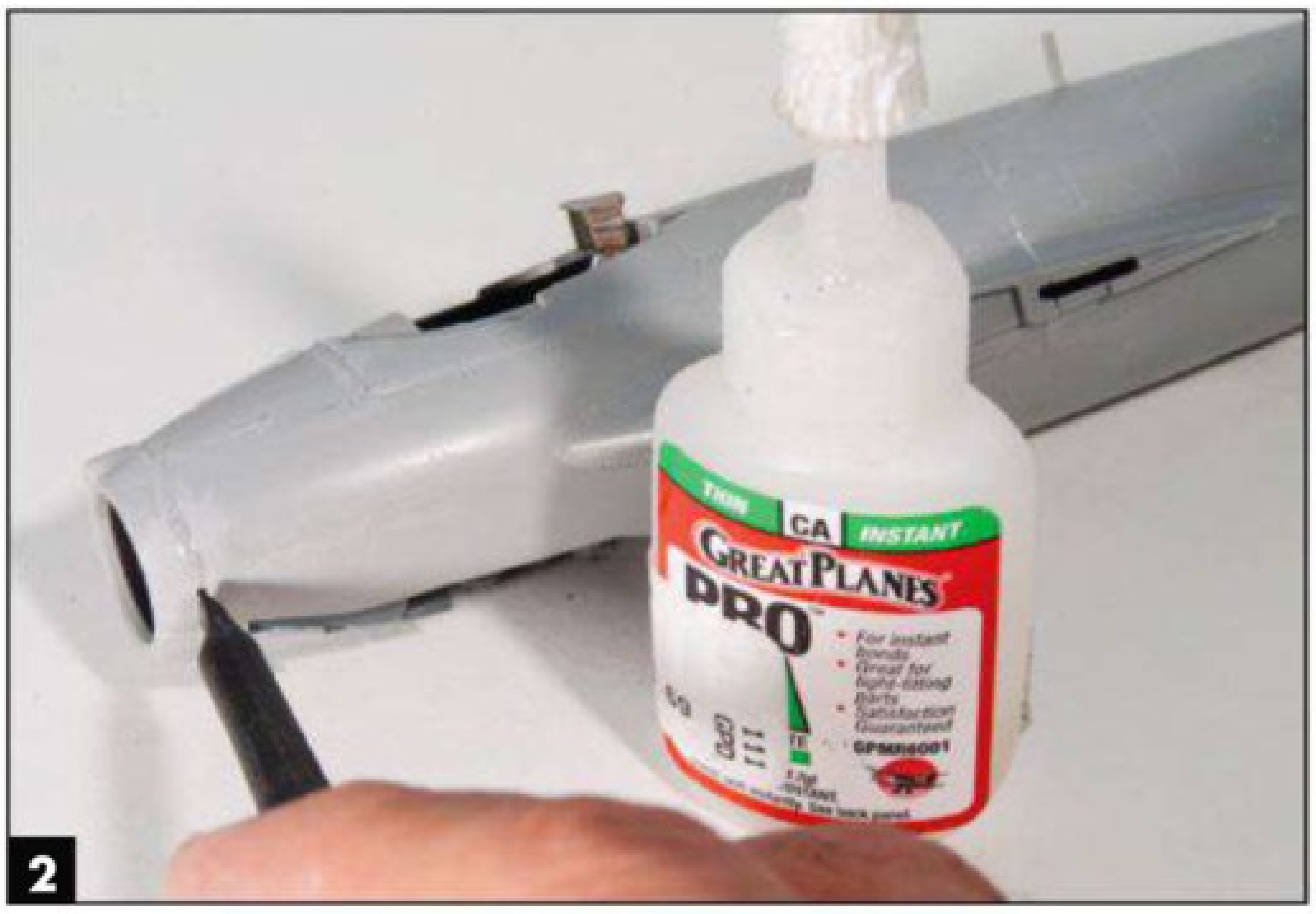
Now, thanks to new products and lots of practice, I find myself drawn to natural-metal airplanes, especially fighters from the 1950s. Knowing how to apply sharp metal finishes is useful for the cars and airliners I build, too.

When I built HobbyBoss' 1/48 scale MiG-17, I experimented with new options over my favorite metallic finish, Alclad II. As we'll see, most of the work is at the front end. That's because surface preparation is critical to a great natural-metal finish.



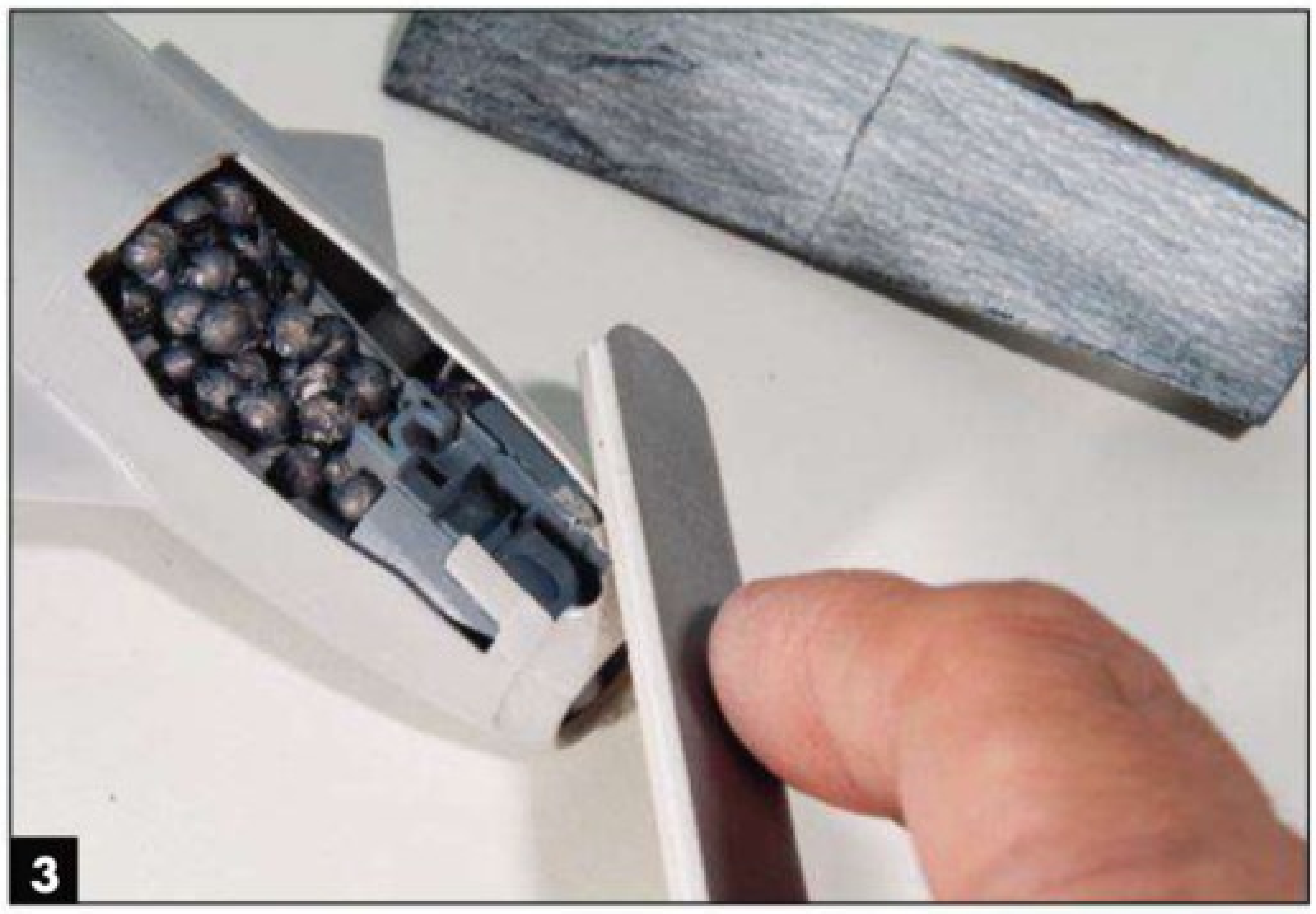
1

One of the MiG-17's defining features is the gaping intake with the big splitter to duct air around the cockpit and nose-gear well. After building and painting the cockpit, I airbrushed the splitter and the insides of the fuselage halves with Testors Model Master aluminum enamel.



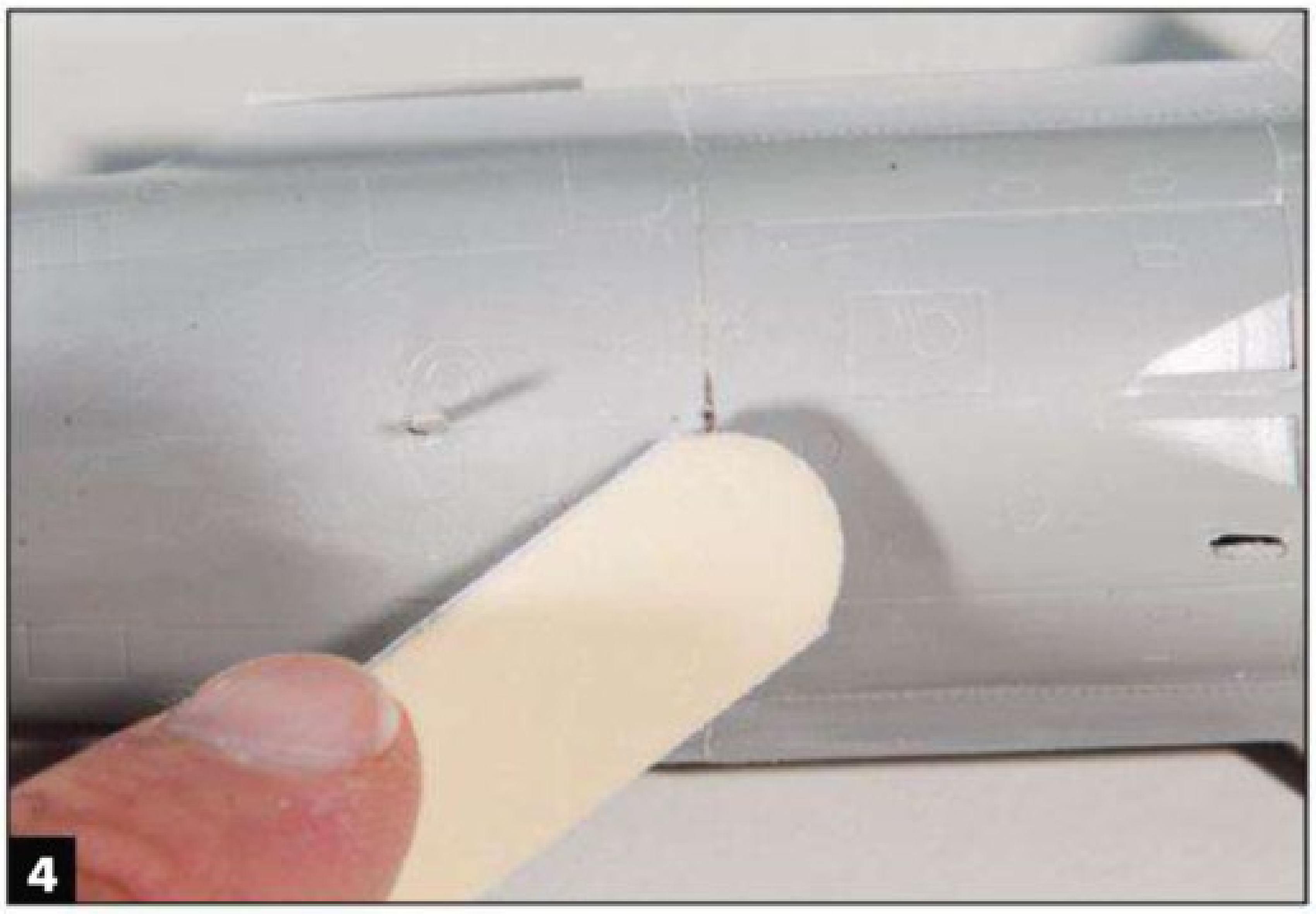
2

I had trouble getting clean fits on many of the MiG's major components, but I needed everything to be smooth for the metallic finish. I filled all gaps with thin super glue; it sands as smooth as the surrounding plastic, as opposed to the grainy finish of some filler putties.



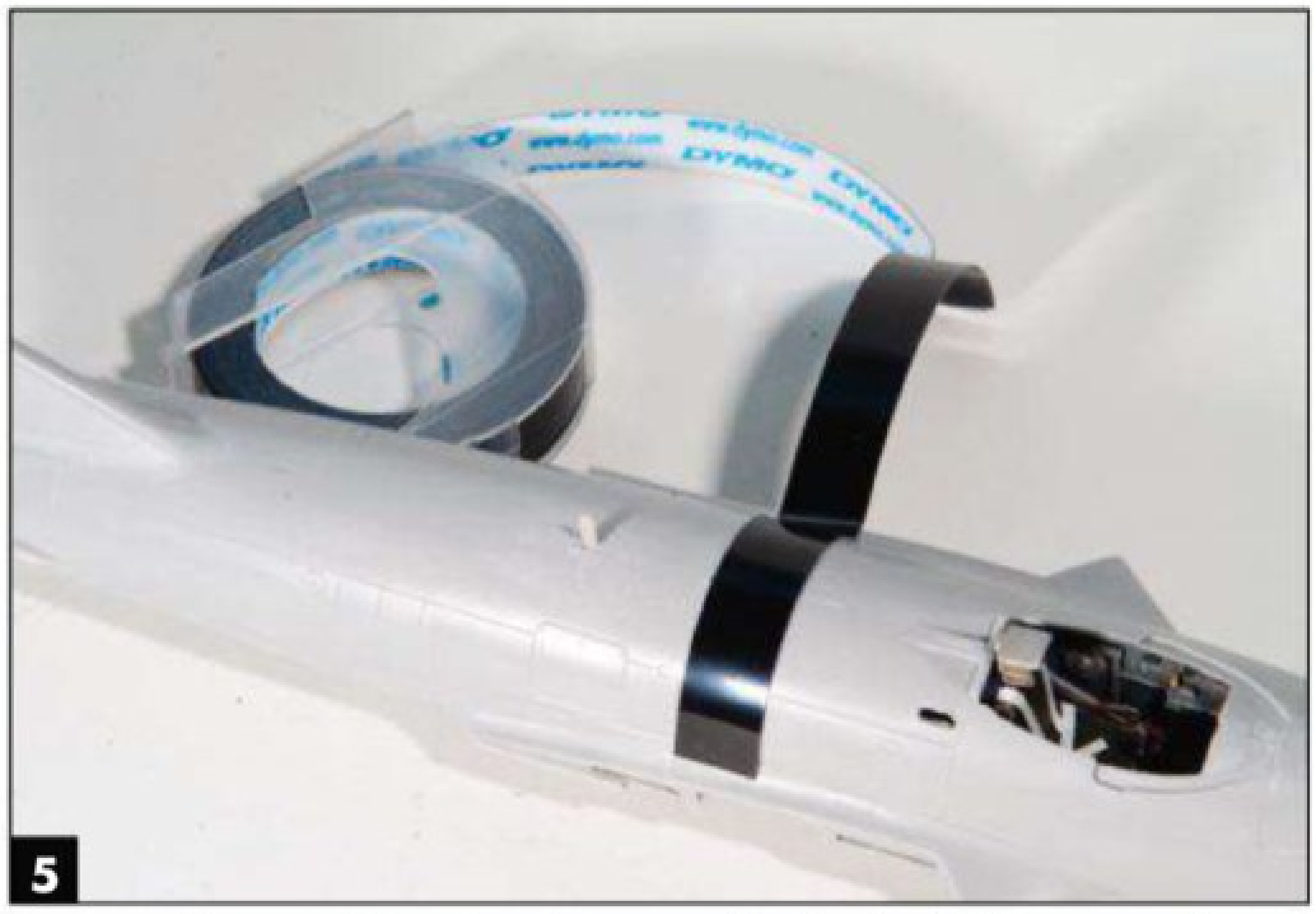
3

The secret to a great natural-metal finish is starting with a smooth surface, so everything you do now to achieve that is necessary. I sanded each super glue-filled gap with 1000-grit paper, then with all three sides of a sanding stick, buffing the plastic to a mirror finish. Note all of the fishing weights under the cockpit to keep the nose down.



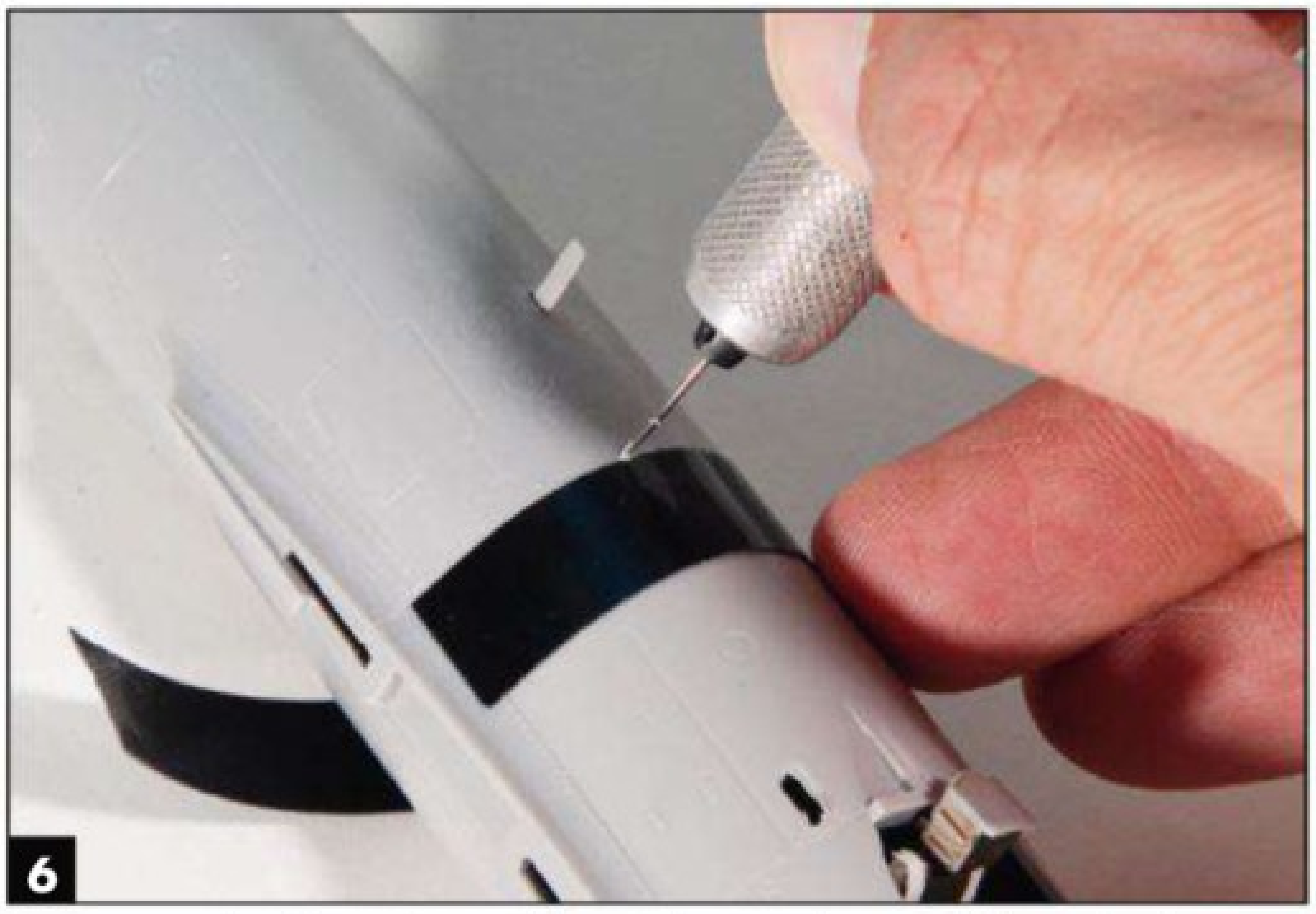
4

HobbyBoss's kit provides the rear fuselage separately to show off the engine. I wanted my MiG closed up, and that meant filling and sanding the gaps and steps between the front and rear sections. After a liberal application of liquid cement, I added super glue and sanded the seam, which eliminated the panel line that should be there.



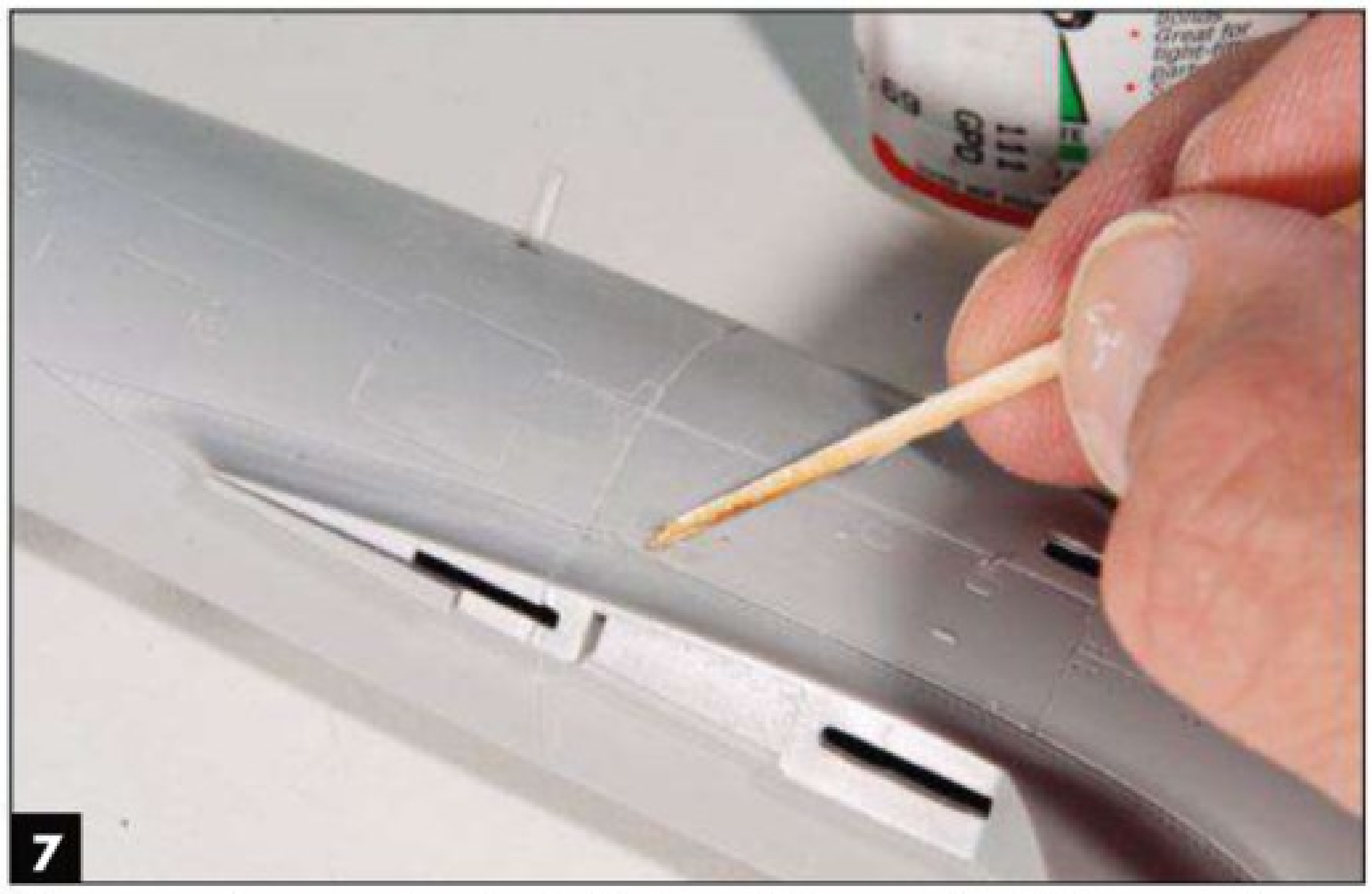
5

To restore lost panel lines, I stuck Dymo self-adhesive labeling tape along the edge of the line to guide the scriber. The tape is flexible enough to go around curves like the fuselage, sticky enough to stay in place, and sturdy enough to guide the point of the tool.



6

I own several scribers, but my favorite is a sewing needle in a pin vise. Gently run the needle along the edge of the Dymo tape without applying much pressure. Repeat this and the line will gradually deepen. Pressing too hard can cause the needle to go off course.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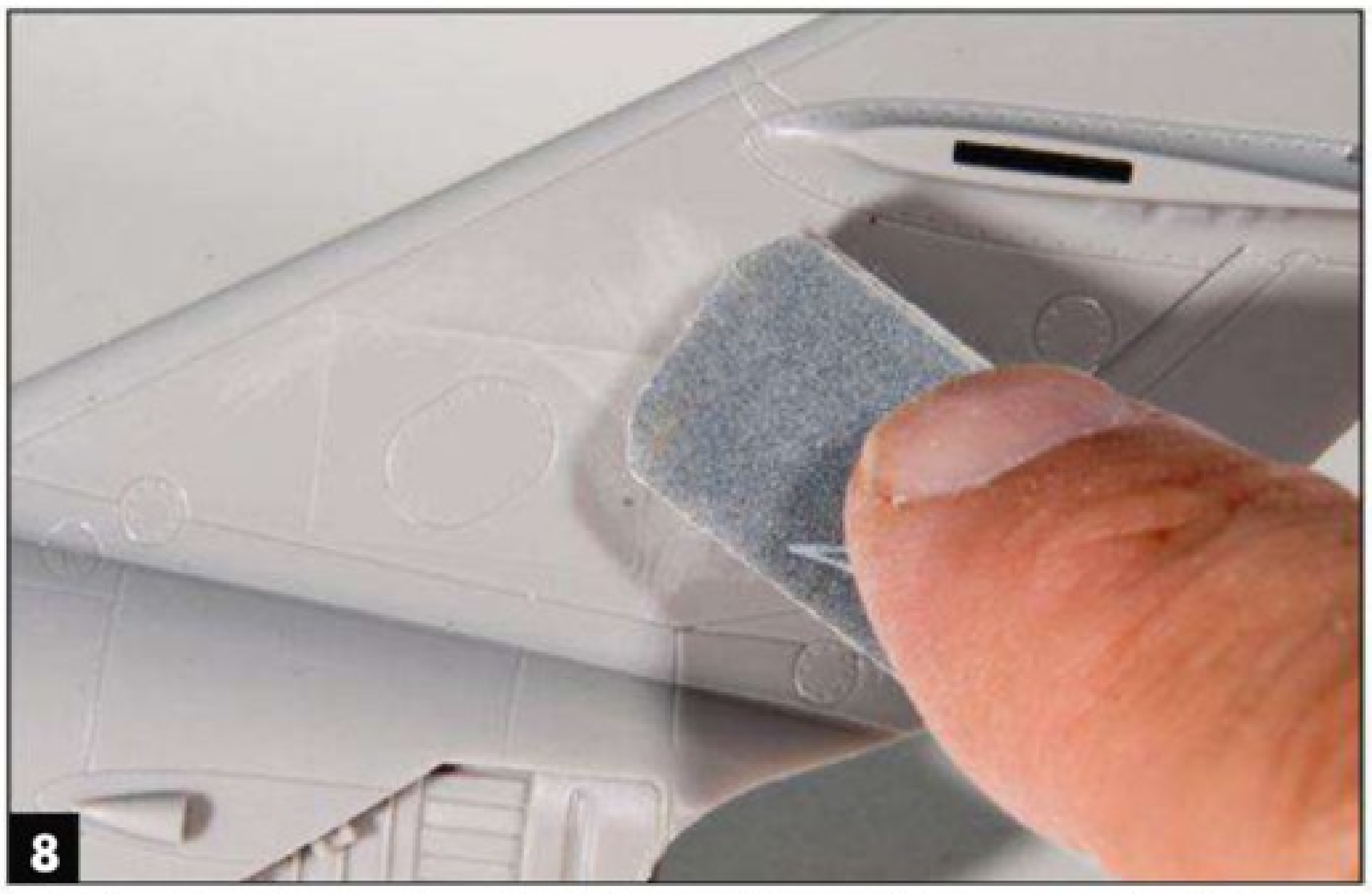
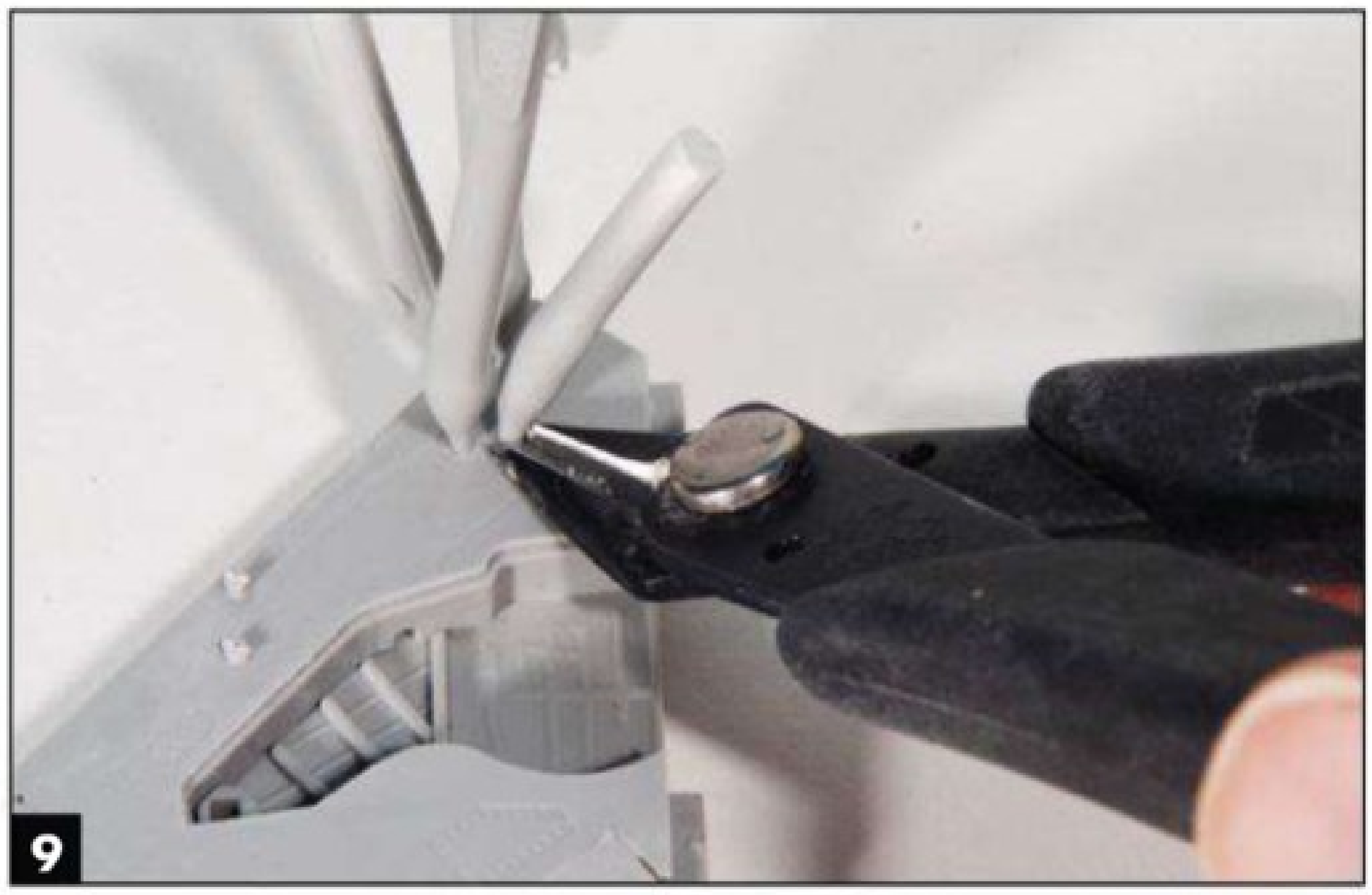
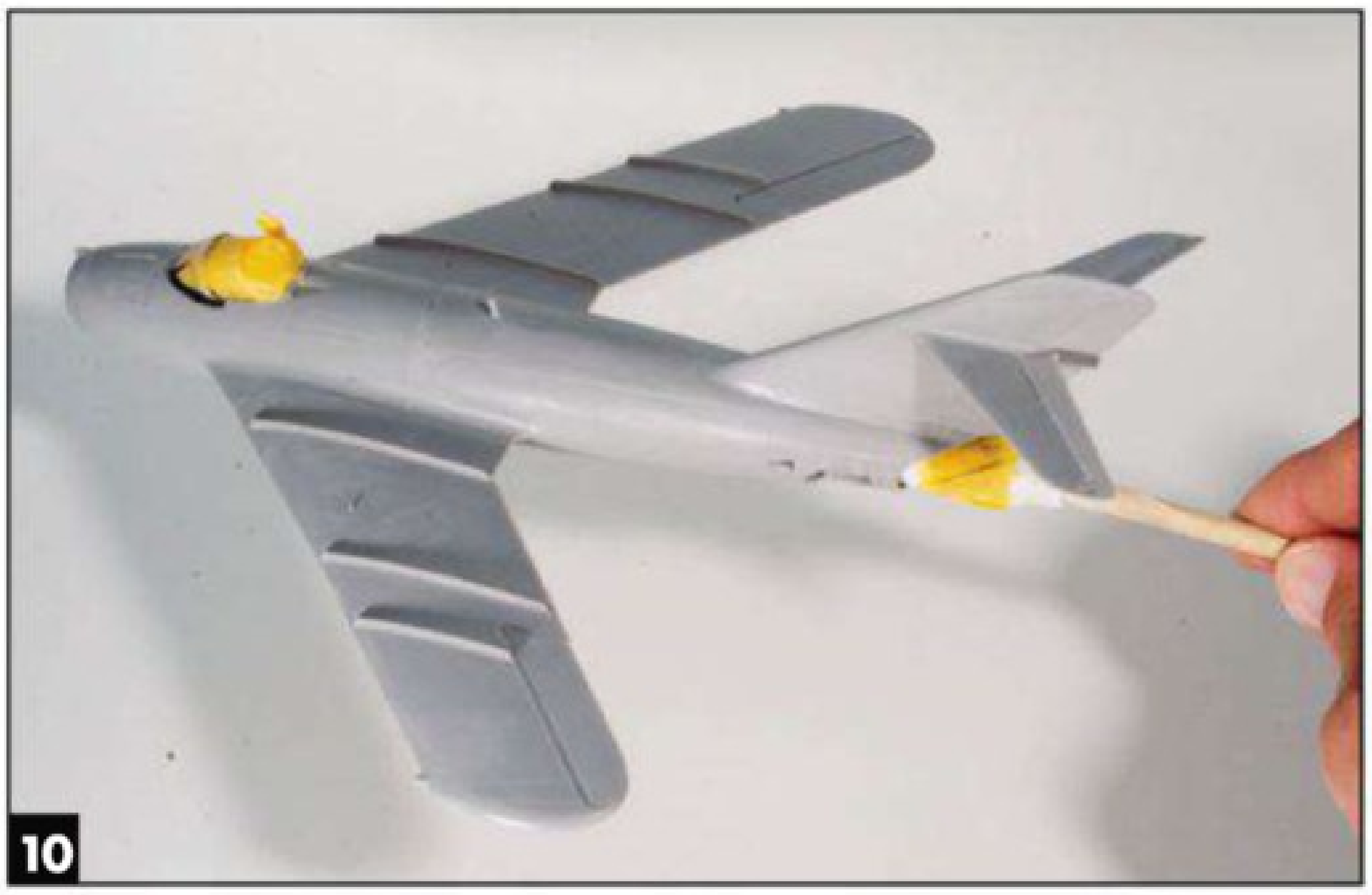
If you scratch or mar the plastic during scribing, apply a little super glue to the blemish and sand it smooth. You may need to rescribe the lines around the spot if glue runs into them.


8

I checked for other surface blemishes, such as mold seams — the MiG's tail had a barely visible line around a panel on the port side of the vertical stabilizer. It may not seem like much, but under metallic paint it would have been obvious.


9

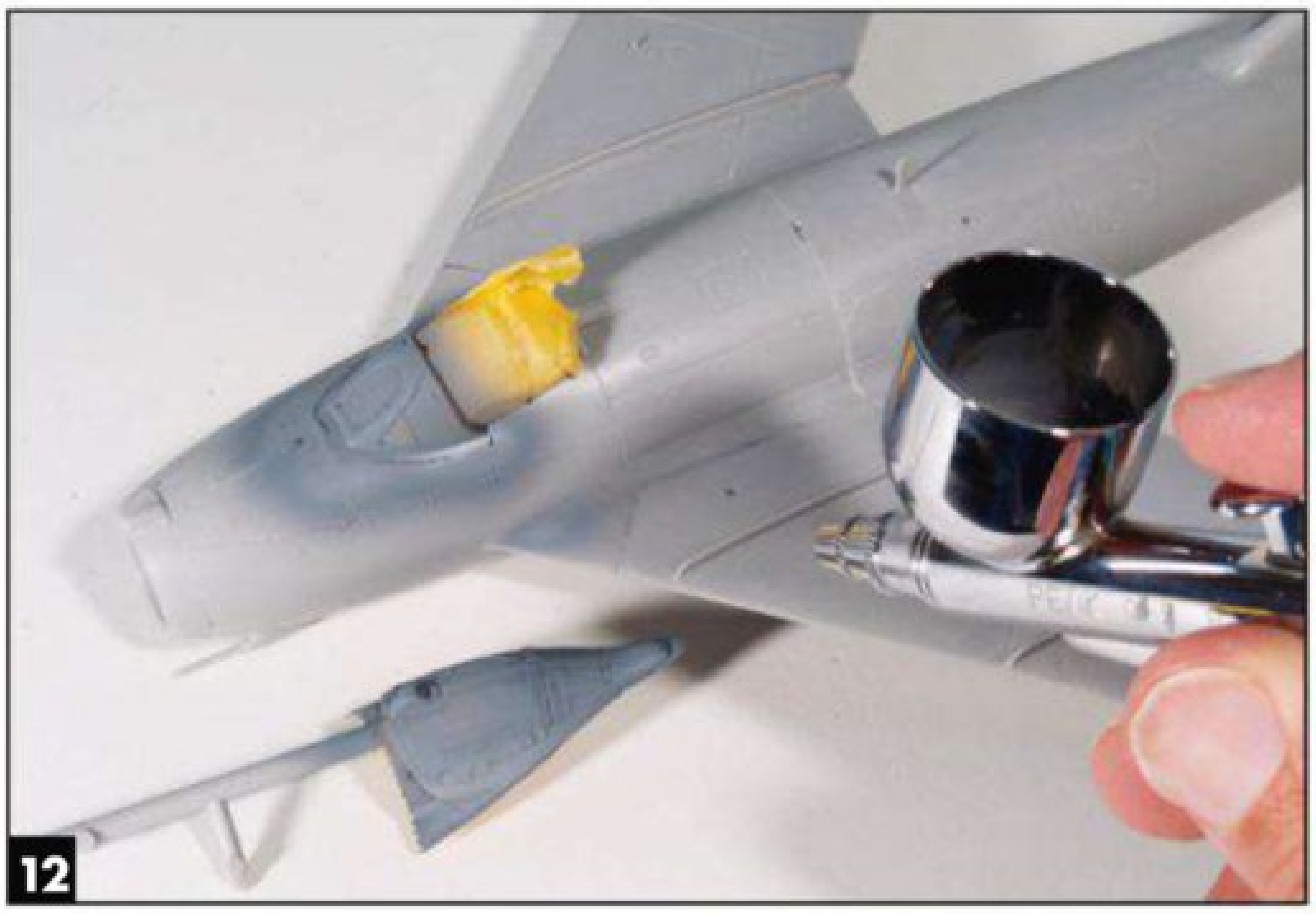
I filled unneeded locator holes under the wings with the tapered ends left from stretching sprue. Push the points into the holes so they fill the voids, then apply liquid glue. I left the parts to dry overnight, then trimmed the excess off and sanded the nubs flush with the surface.


10

Metallic paints are extremely sensitive to fingerprints and body oils, so the more you can do to avoid touching the model the better. I fashioned a handle by inserting brass tube into the tail pipe, snugging the fit with paper towel and Plasticine. I masked the cockpit and windscreen with Tamiya tape and rolled-up paper towel.

Polly S
PLASTIC PRE
PRE-PAINTING CLEANSING AGENT FOR PLASTIC SURFACES
11

I'd handled the model a lot by now, so I rubbed it down with Testors (formerly Polly S) Plastic Prep. It cuts the grease, removes sanding residue, and reduces static electricity that attracts dust. It evaporates in just a few minutes. Then, the model is ready to paint.


12

I airbrushed the cockpit interior color (Tamiya neutral gray) over the canopy frames to match the rest of the aircraft. The paint revealed a small gap around the edge of the windscreen. I filled it, sanded it smooth, then cleaned up the area with another application of cockpit color.

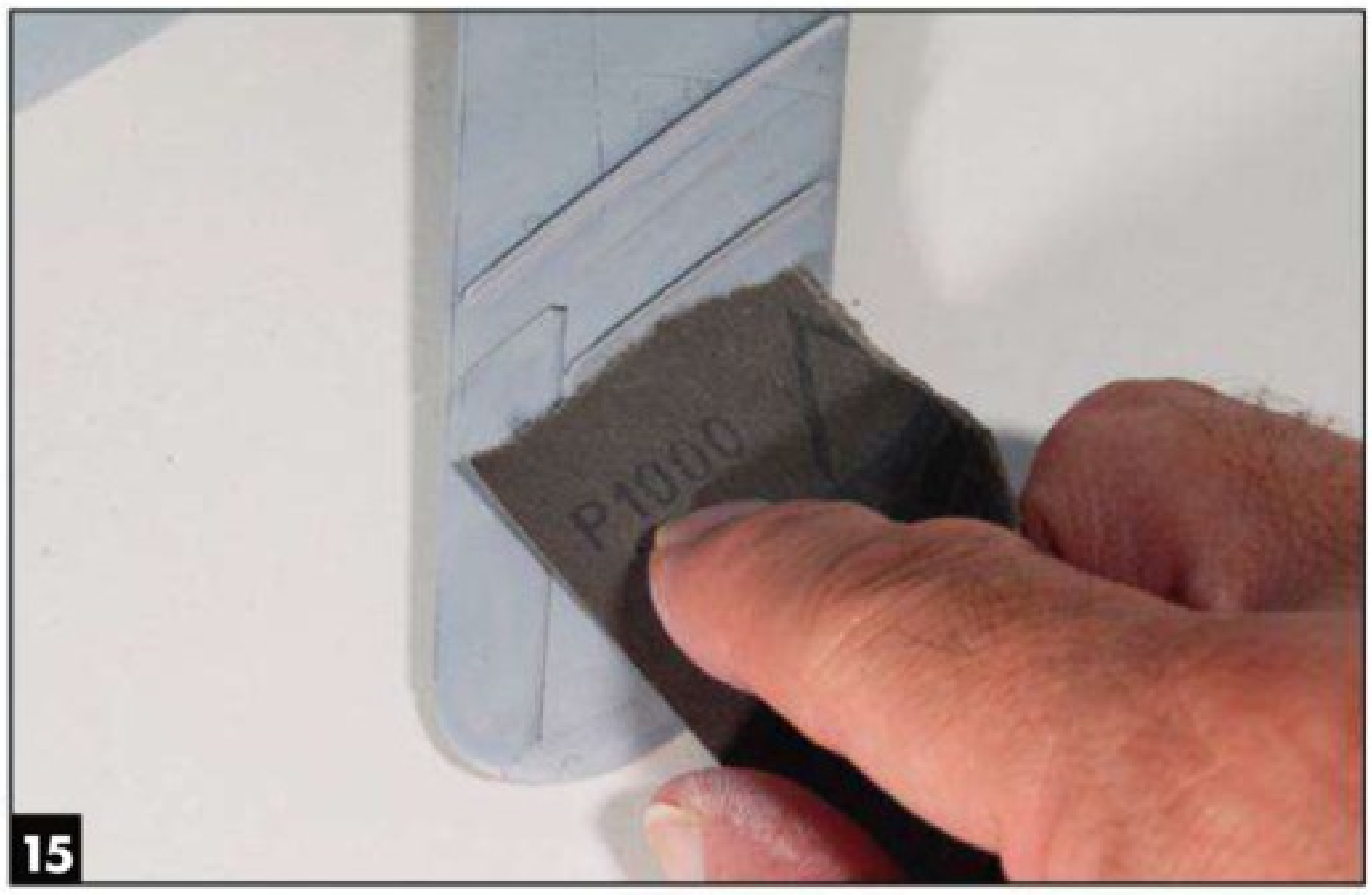
13

Immediately before priming the model, I used a tack cloth to be sure the surface was dust-free. Lightly touch or rub a clean section of the cloth over the model. Don't press hard, and work carefully to avoid snagging the cloth on any delicate parts.

ALCLAD II
LACQUER
GREY PRIMER &
MICROFILLER

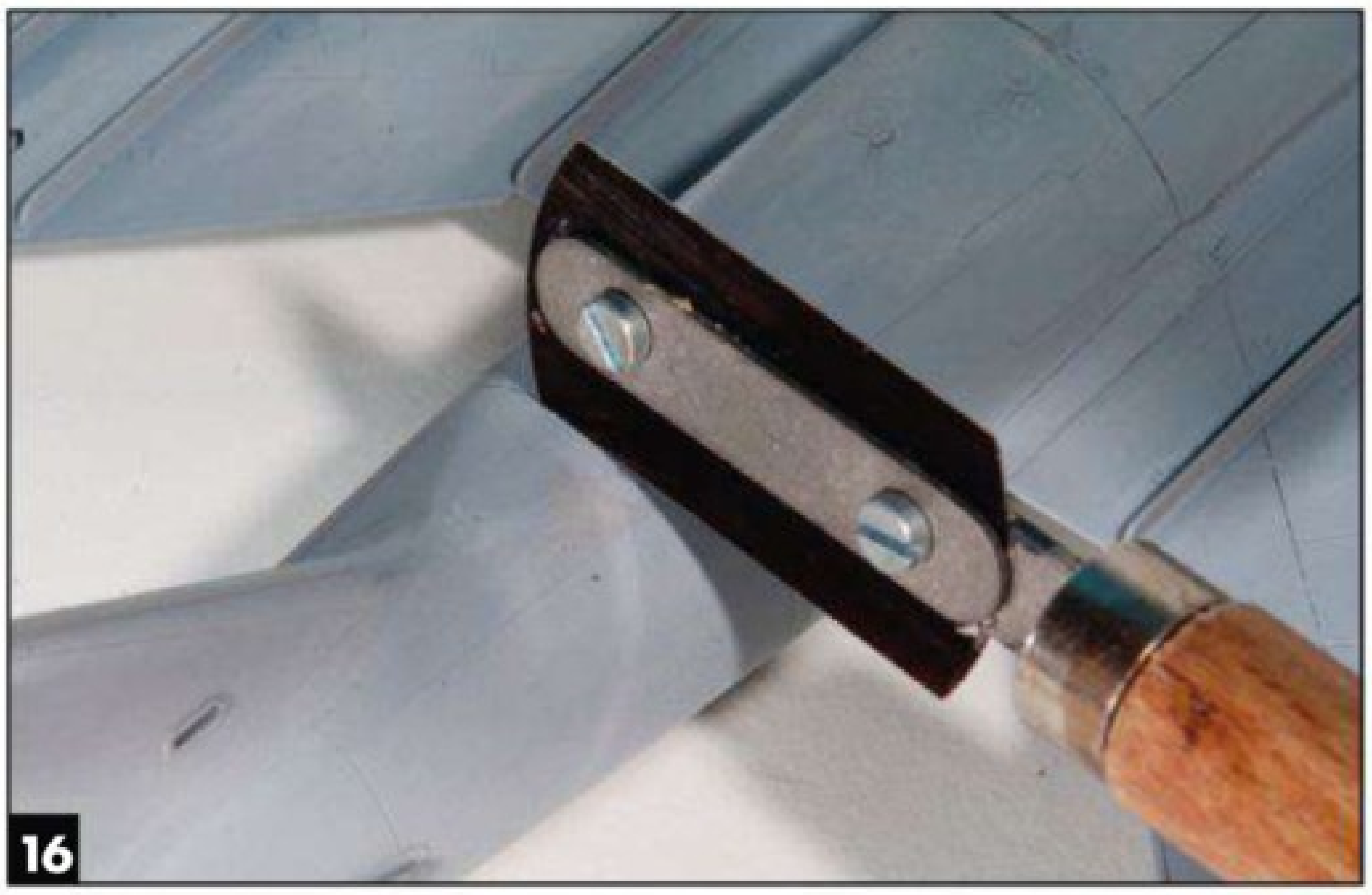
14

To fill scratches or other blemishes and provide a solid foundation for the paint, I sprayed the MiG with Alclad II Gray Primer and Microfiller. This stuff is a lot like thin Mr. Surfacer, providing a velvety finish straight from the bottle. (Alclad metallic finishes are lacquers that can attack bare plastic, so priming is essential when using them.)



15

I sanded the entire model with Tamiya 1000-grit sandpaper to knock down any rough patches in the primer.

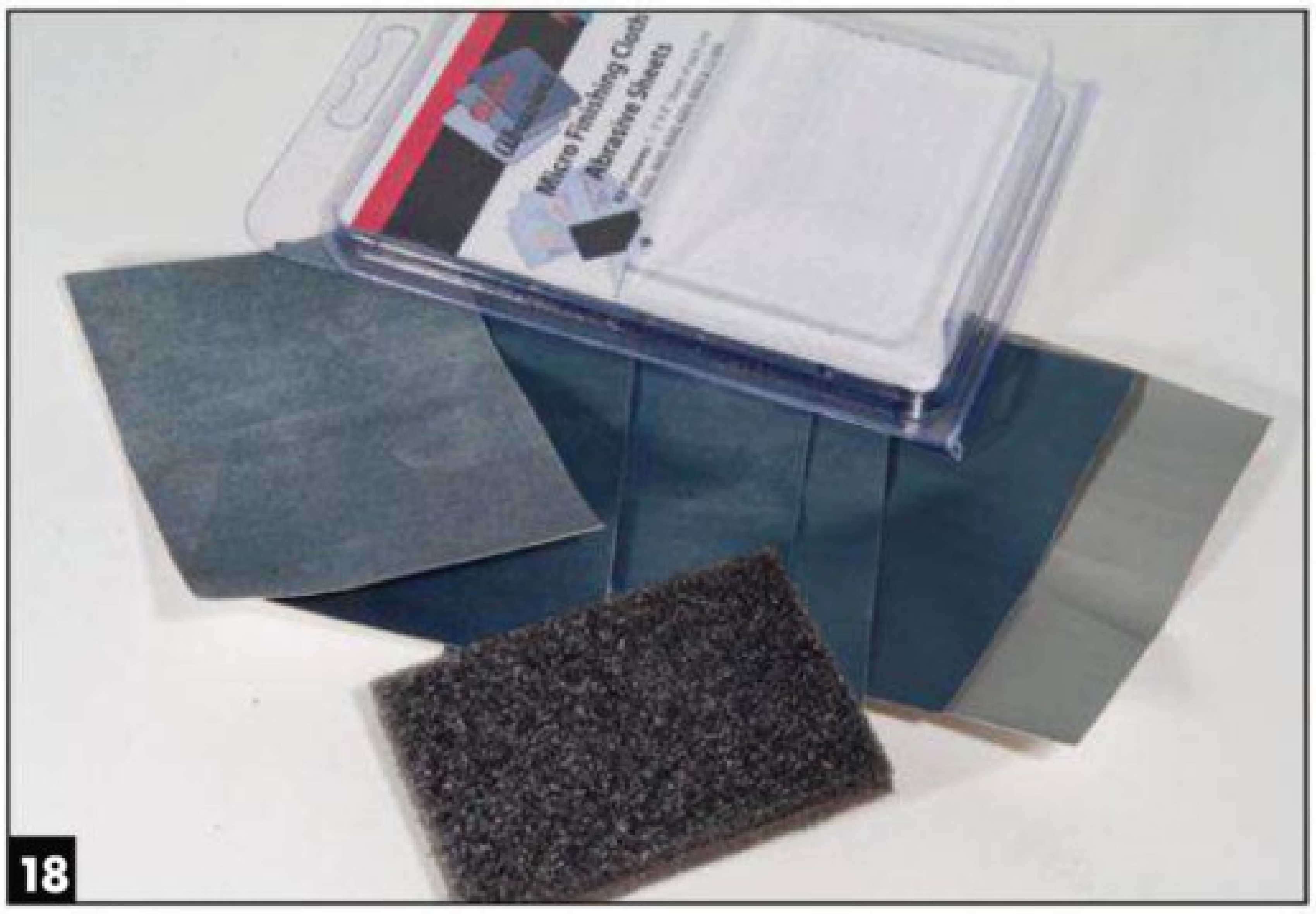


16

The primer revealed a few damaged panel lines I missed the first time. I restored them by dragging a fine razor saw across the seam. This is an easy way to repair short, straight panel lines.

17

After repairs, I cleaned the model in a mild dishsoap solution using a toothbrush to remove sanding residue from panel lines and recesses. I blotted puddles of water from the model with a paper towel, then let the model air dry. Before painting, make sure there is no water trapped inside that may run out during painting — nothing will ruin paint faster.



18

Because the secret of a good metallic finish is the getting the surface right, it's worth investing in a set of fine finishing cloths or pads. I used a set of sheets from Alpha Abrasives that included a two-sided foam pad and six cloths of progressively finer grits — 3200, 3600, 4000, 6000, 8000, and 12000.

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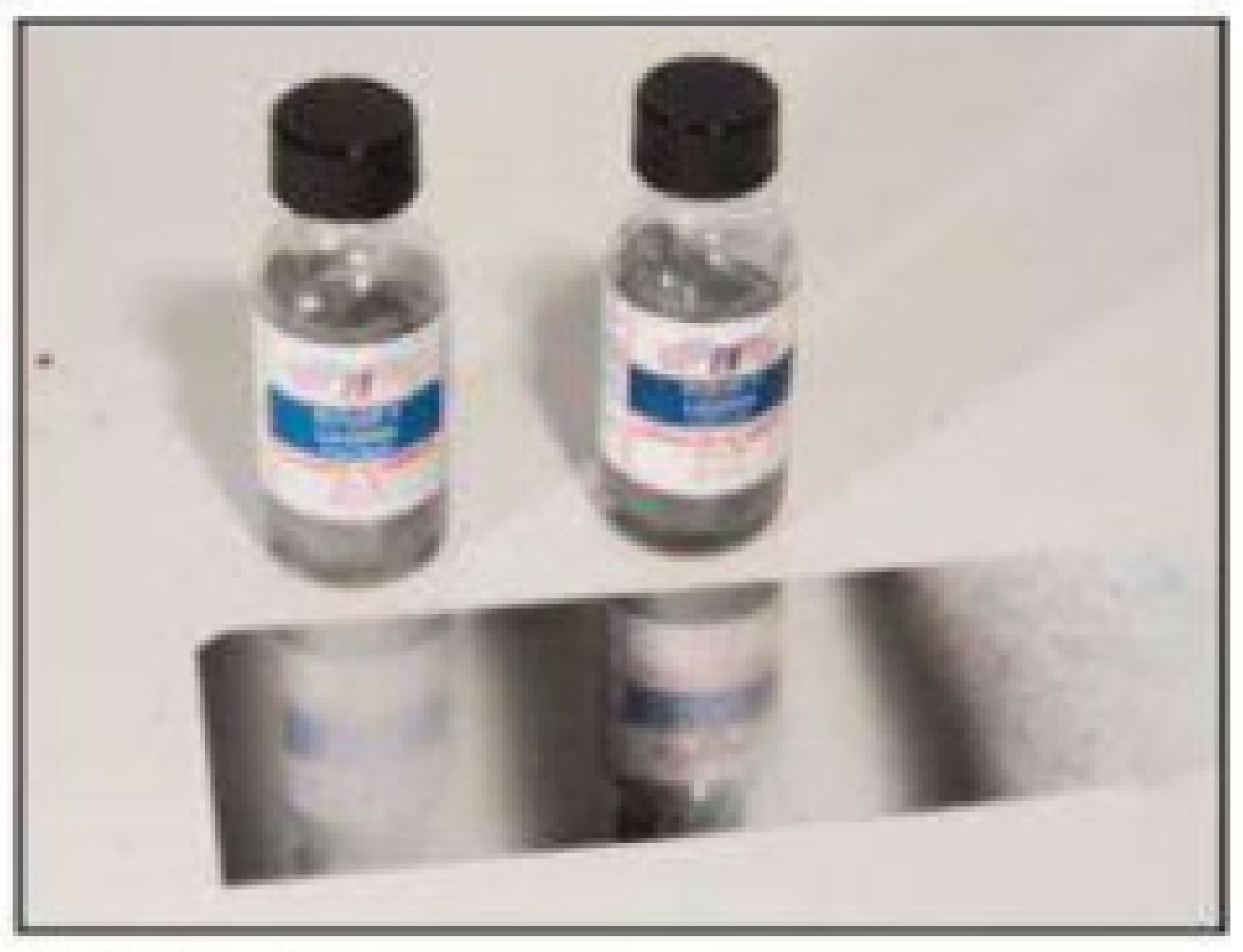
7 METAL MODELING CHOICES



Alclad II

www.alclad2.com

1-ounce bottle, $7.99

Pros: Tough, bright shine; no visible grain; airbrushes straight from the bottle; fast drying; can be masked in a few minutes; wide color range.

Cons: Requires primer; high-shine finishes need gloss-black base; can be applied too heavily, ruining the effect; must be airbrushed.

Comments: Easy to use but requires more preparation because of the primer and base coats. You can vary the effect by changing the density of layers with small differences in air pressure.

Floquil old silver and bright silver

www.testors.com

1-ounce bottle, $5.45

Pros: Tough, resilient finish; applies like other model enamels; can be mixed with other Floquil colors to create different shades for panel effects; can be hand-brushed; resists tape reasonably well.

Cons: Must be thinned for airbrushing; slightly grainy finish; long drying time.

Comments: These two have been an old standby for metal finishes, and they still have their uses. Bright silver is especially useful for backing lights, as it is highly reflective.

Hawkeye's Talon acrylic NMF paint

www.hawkeyeshobbies.com

1-ounce bottle, $5.99

Pros: Acrylic paint is less noxious and smelly during application; dries quickly to a semigloss sheen; can be buffed and polished; accepts decals well.

Cons: Slightly grainy finish; applies better over primer.

Comments: Talon paints are a nice alternative for modelers who are sensitive to smelly enamels and lacquers. I find they take a little practice to get right, and it's easy to overdo the paint and produce runs.

Hawkeye's Spray Metal

1-ounce bottle, $6.99

Pros: Produces a tough, flat finish; airbrushes straight from the bottle; enamel-based, so doesn't need primer or base coat; wide range of shades; using the polishing powders reduces fine grain and brightens the shine considerably; can be masked or polished quickly; can be tinted with gloss enamels.

Cons: Needs polishing powder for best effect.

Comments: Formerly SnJ Spray Metal, Hawkeye's product is a good option, producing a nice finish with less preparation than Alclad II.

Humbrol No. 11 silver

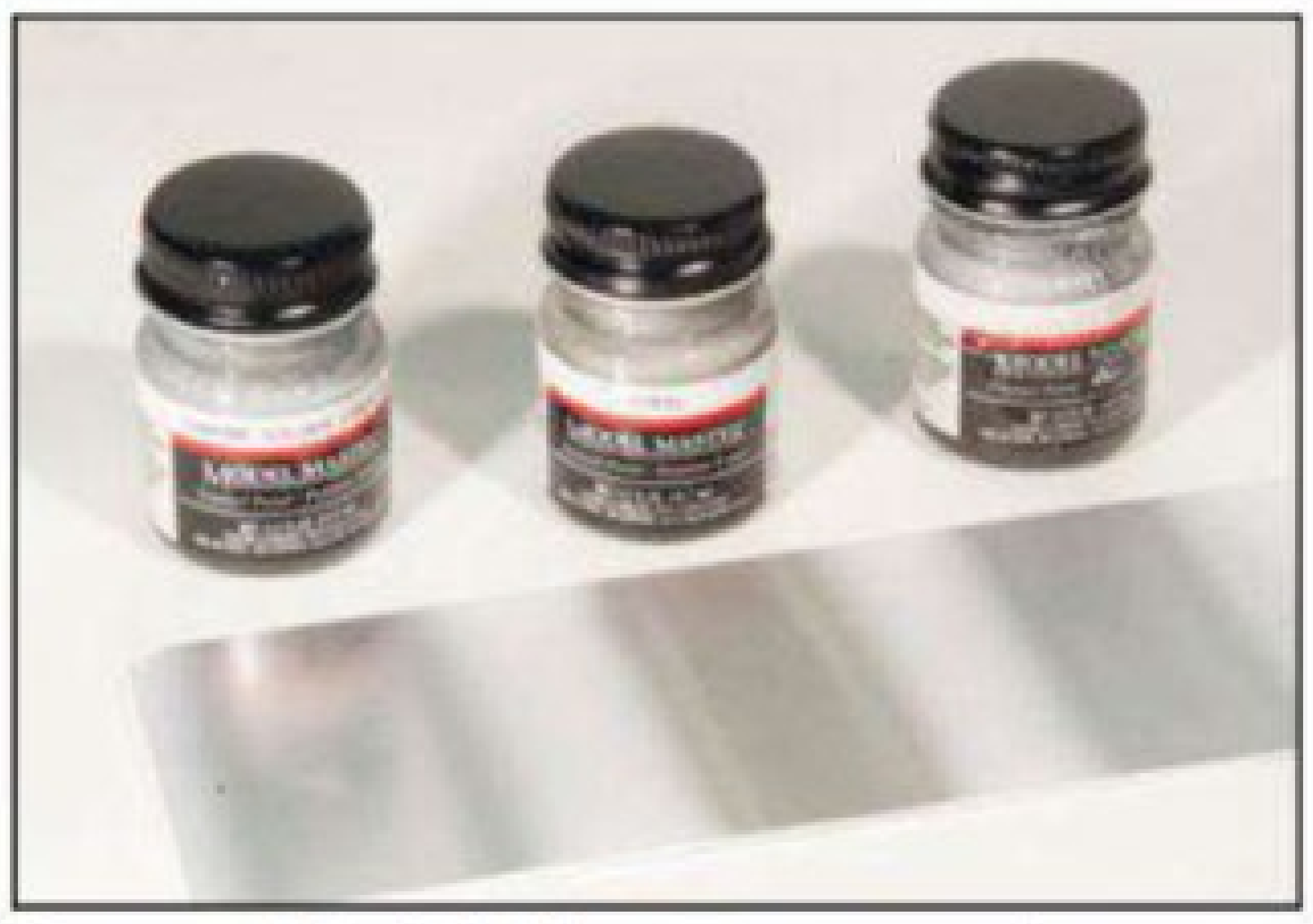
www.airfix-usa.com

14ml (.48-ounce) tinlet, $2

Pros: Tough, semigloss finish; applies like other model enamels; can be mixed with other Humbrol colors to create panel variation; can be hand-brushed; resists being pulled up by masking tape.

Cons: Must be thinned for airbrushing; produces slightly grainy finish; extended drying time.

Comments: I hand-brushed a lot of this stuff on 1/72 scale bombers when I was a kid, with questionable results, but you shouldn't count this paint out. I've seen several good natural-metal finishes achieved with it. Humbrol also produces Metalcote metallic finishes, but I was unable to get any for this test.



Testors Model Master enamels

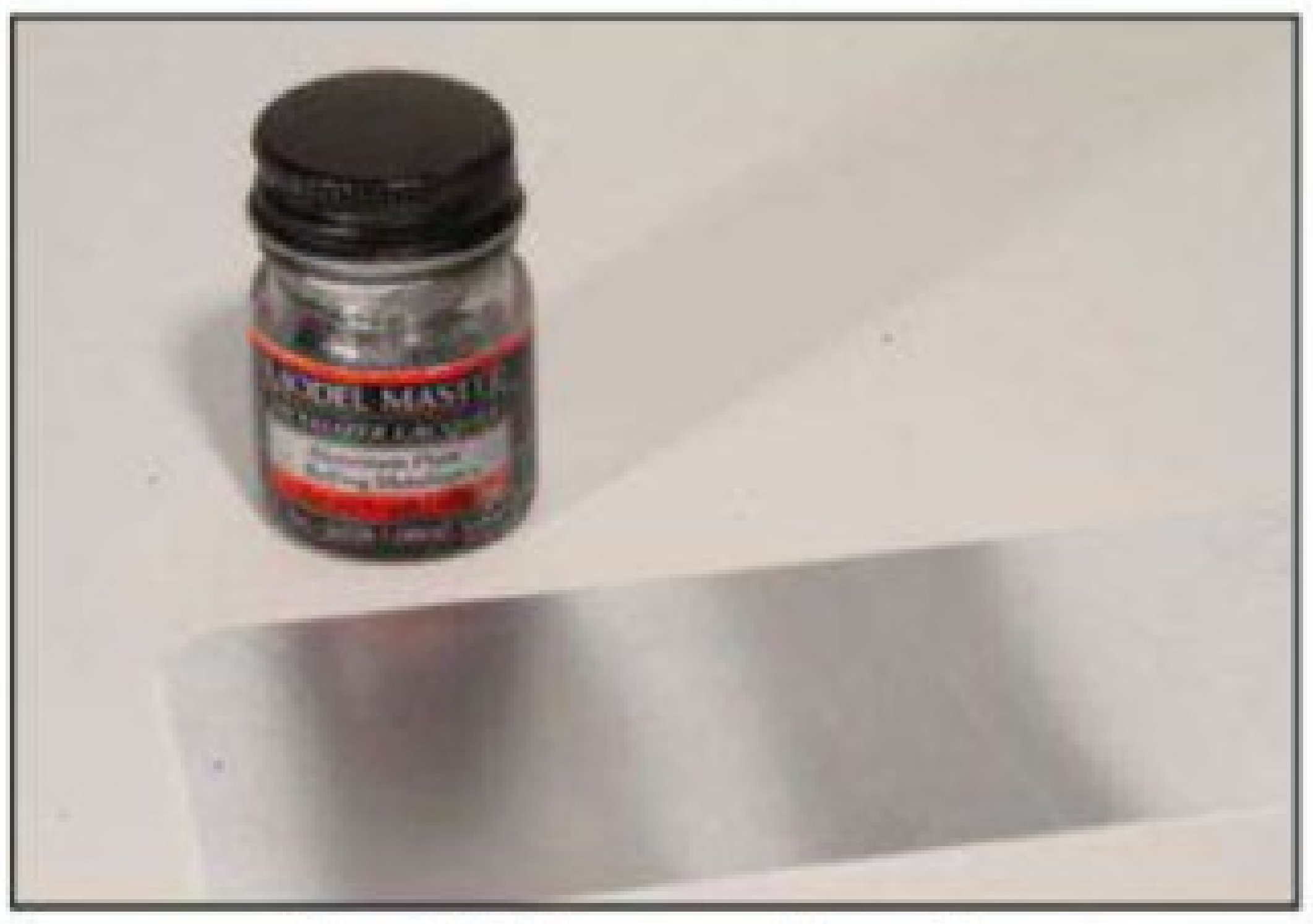
www.testors.com

½-ounce bottle, $3.29

Pros: Applies like any enamel; widely available; can be tinted with other Model Master enamels; chrome silver produces tough, reflective finish.

Cons: Long drying time; looks like paint; must be thinned for airbrushing.

Comments: Testors chrome silver is a lot like Floquil bright silver and looks a lot like mercury in the bottle. It airbrushes well enough with Testors thinner, but the finish looks more like paint than metal, as do the other enamels in the Model Master line.



Testors Model Master Metalizers

½-ounce bottle, $3.99

Pros: Easy to apply; finish is better over bare plastic, so there is less preparation; airbrushes straight from the bottle; wide range of colors; available in spray cans; some colors are buffable.

Cons: Very delicate finish that pulls up easily if masked.

Comments: Probably the most widely available specialty metallic finishes, Metalizers are a good option, but they need to be handled carefully because tape and fingers can easily lift them off plastic. They are great when used over Alclad II or Hawkeye Spray Metal, and the large color range provides a lot of options. The buffable colors allow for panel variation simply by polishing panels differently.

—A.S.

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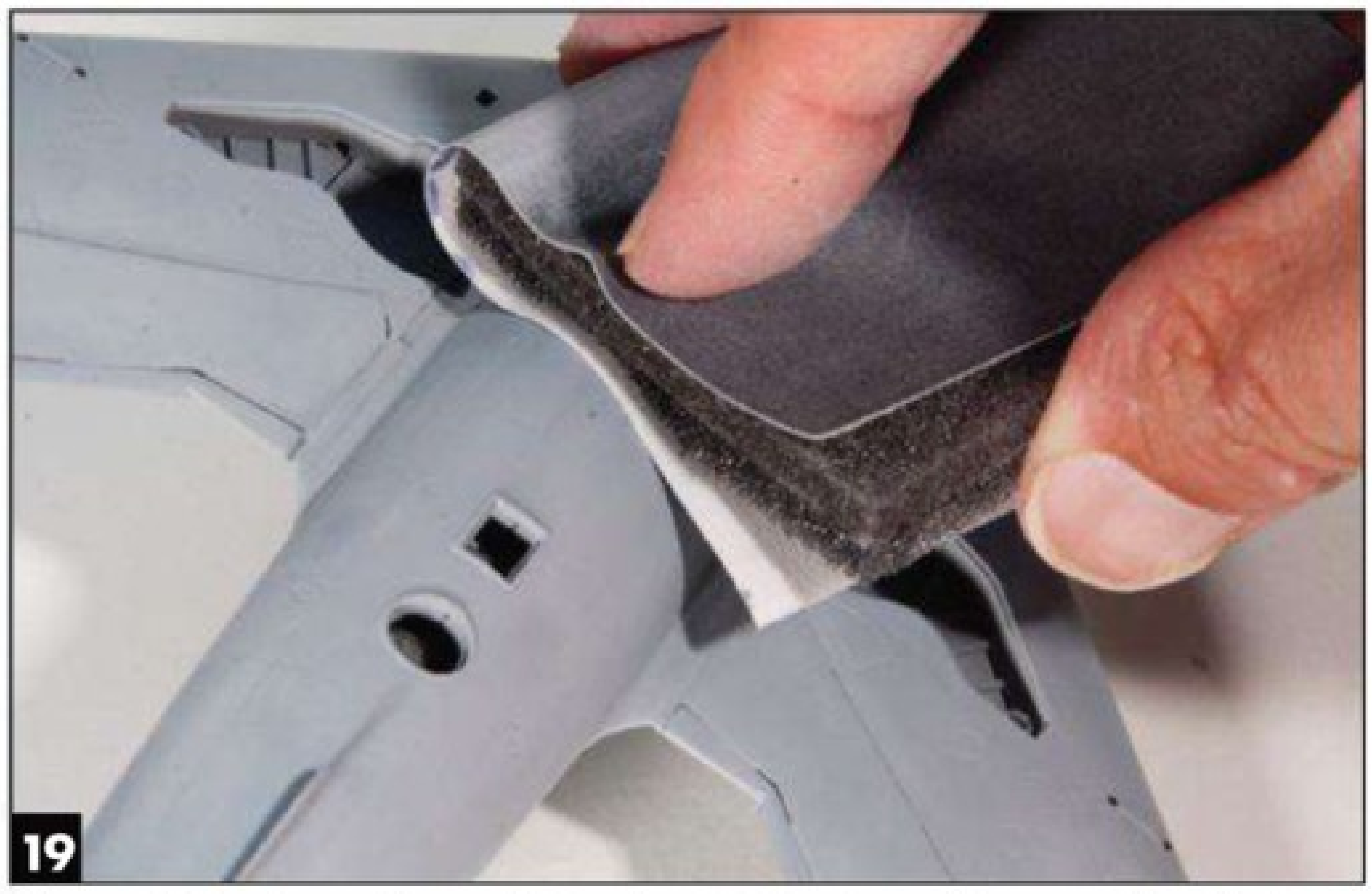

After rubbing the surface with Tamiya 1000-grit sandpaper to knock down the roughest areas that might damage the fine finishing cloths, I began sanding the primer with a 3200-grit cloth wrapped around the foam pad. Work through the grits one by one; for the best finish, don't skip a grit.

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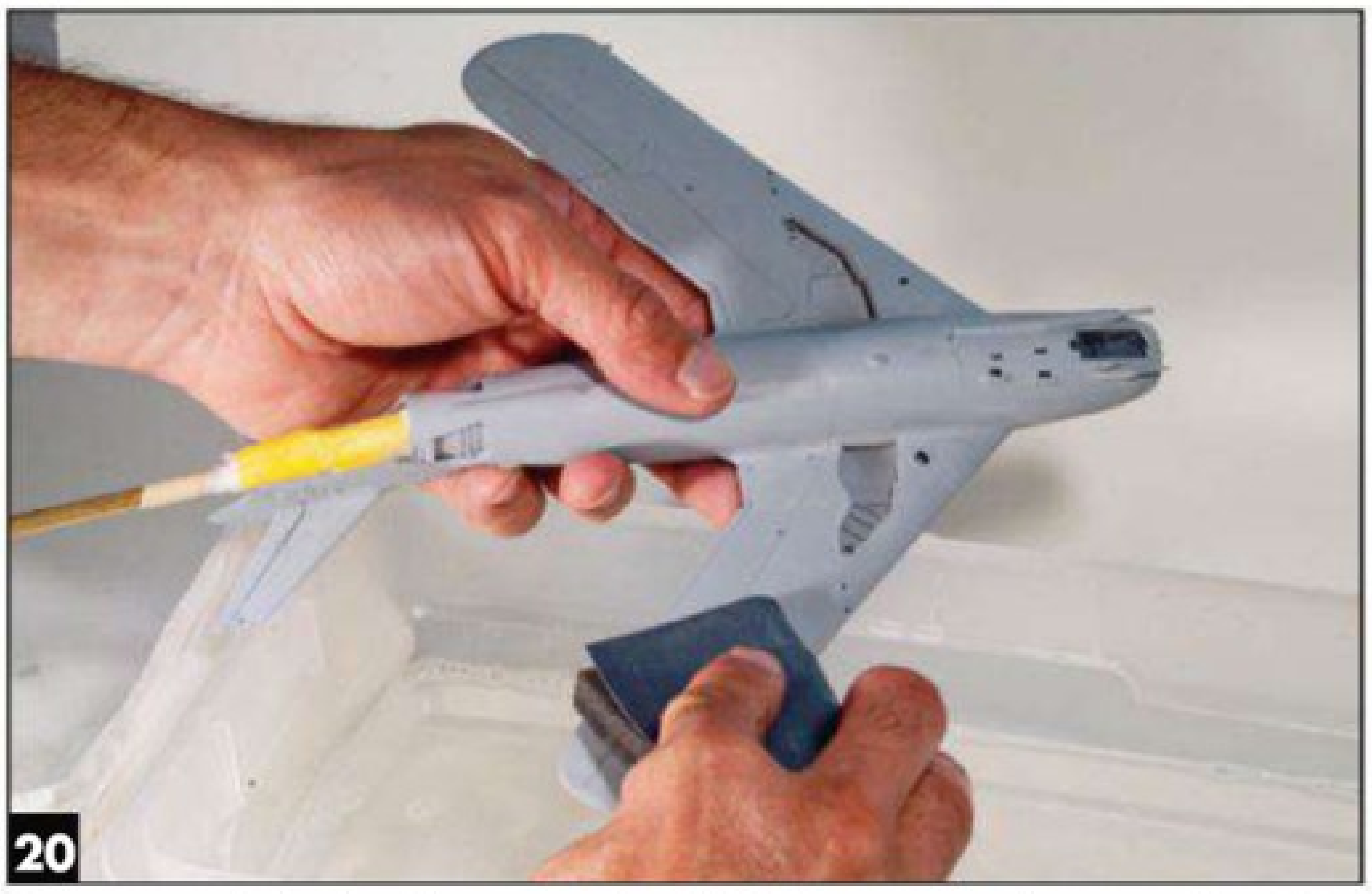

You can sand dry, but for a smoother finish I recommend wet-sanding. The water will remove stray grit and residue that might otherwise damage the finish. You can stand at a sink with the faucet running at a trickle and hold the surface being sanded just under the stream as you sand. Or you can sand over a container of water. Add a few drops of dish detergent to lubricate sanding and break up the water's surface tension.

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Once the primer was smooth, I washed the model with mild, soapy water and a toothbrush to remove residue trapped in recesses. Then I blotted the surface and left the model to dry overnight.

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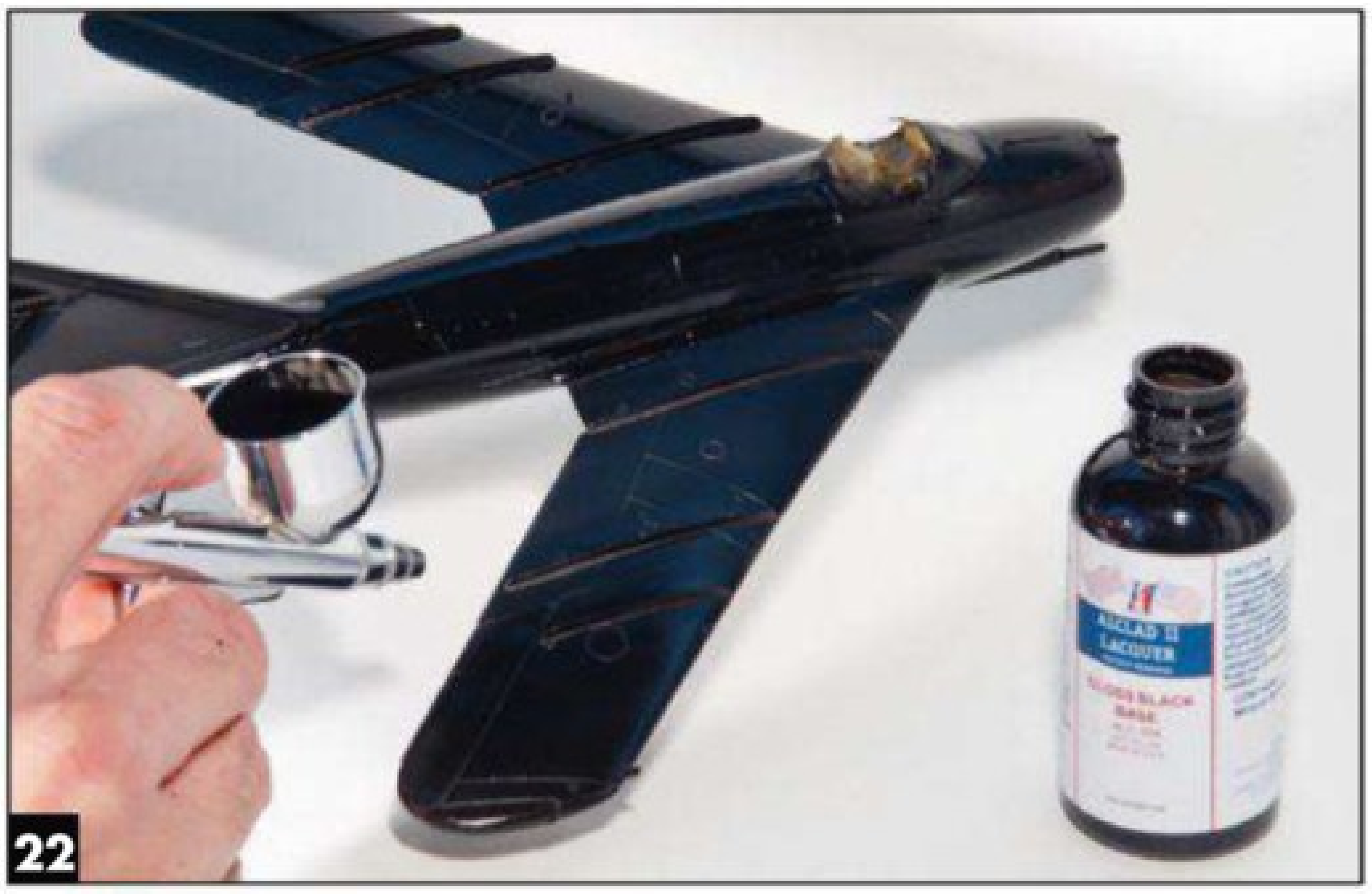

For best effect, Alclad high-shine finishes require a gloss-black enamel undercoat. I used Alclad gloss-black base on the MiG, airbrushing it straight from the bottle at about 15psi. In the past, I've used Tamiya spray-can gloss black (TS-14) with good results. Experiment, then use the paint you are most comfortable with.

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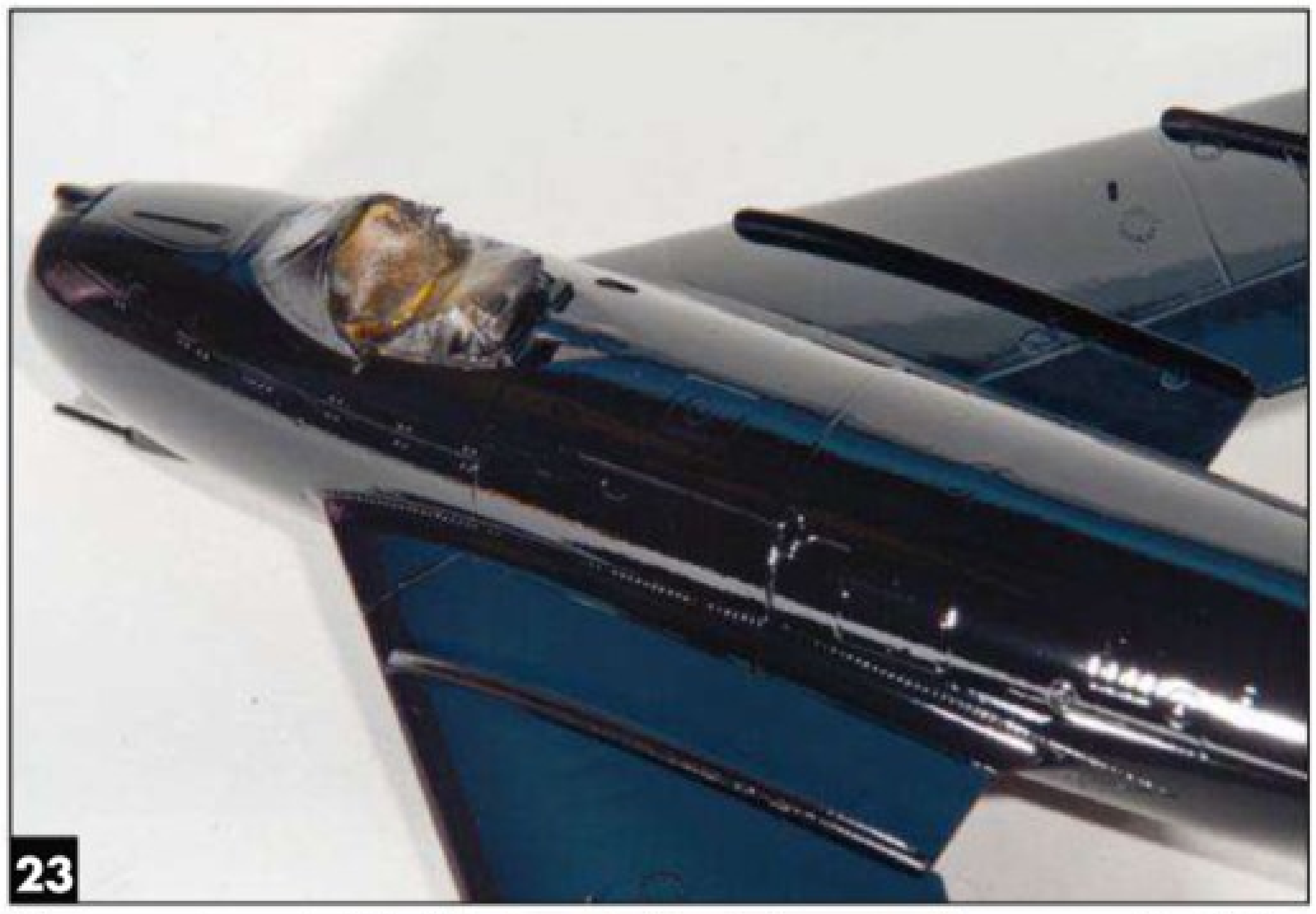

After two days, the black had mostly leveled out, But there was still a little orange peel. I was concerned this roughness would be apparent on the finished model, so it was time for more sanding. Yep, another step and more sanding — but there are no shortcuts to a good metallic finish.

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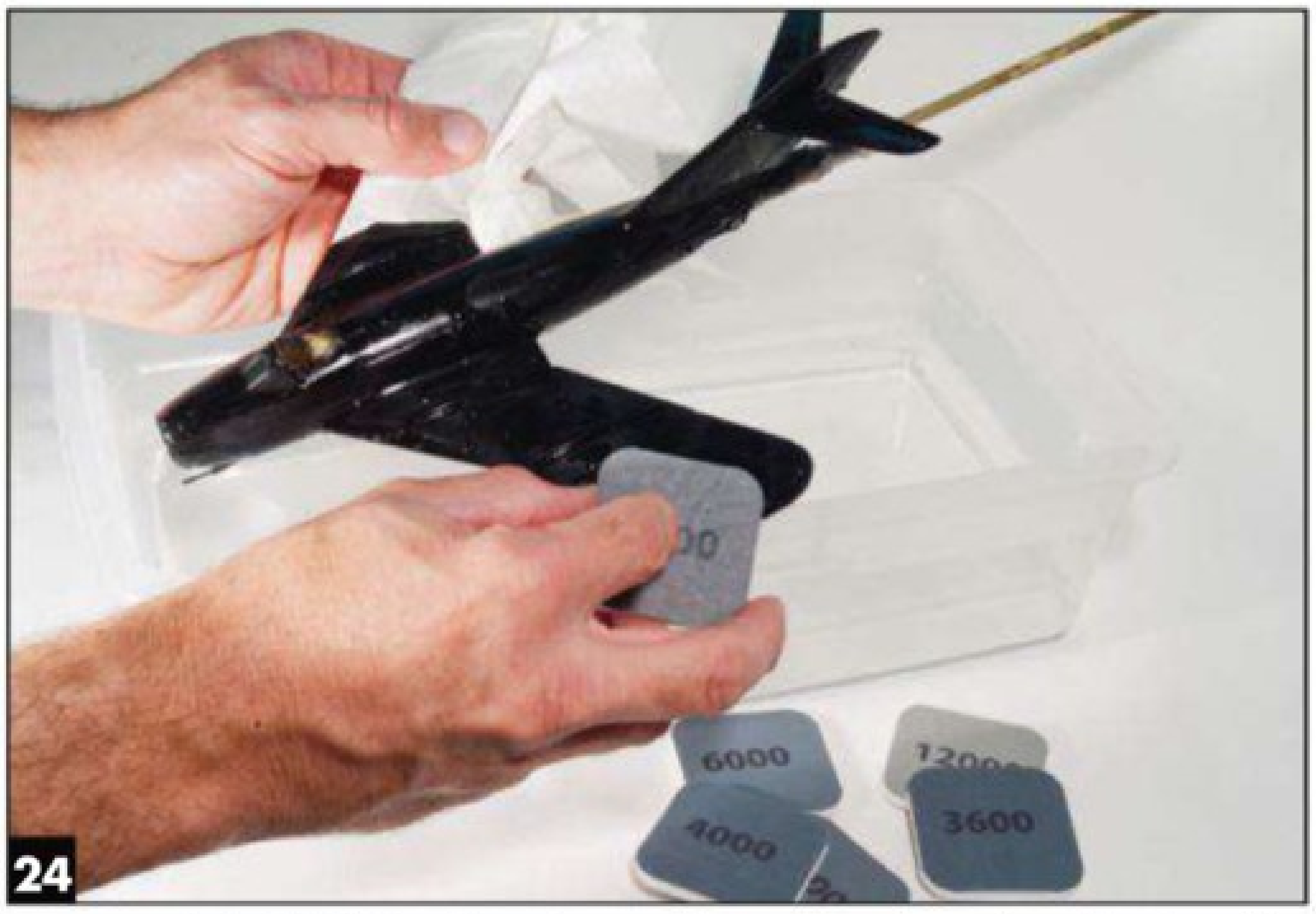
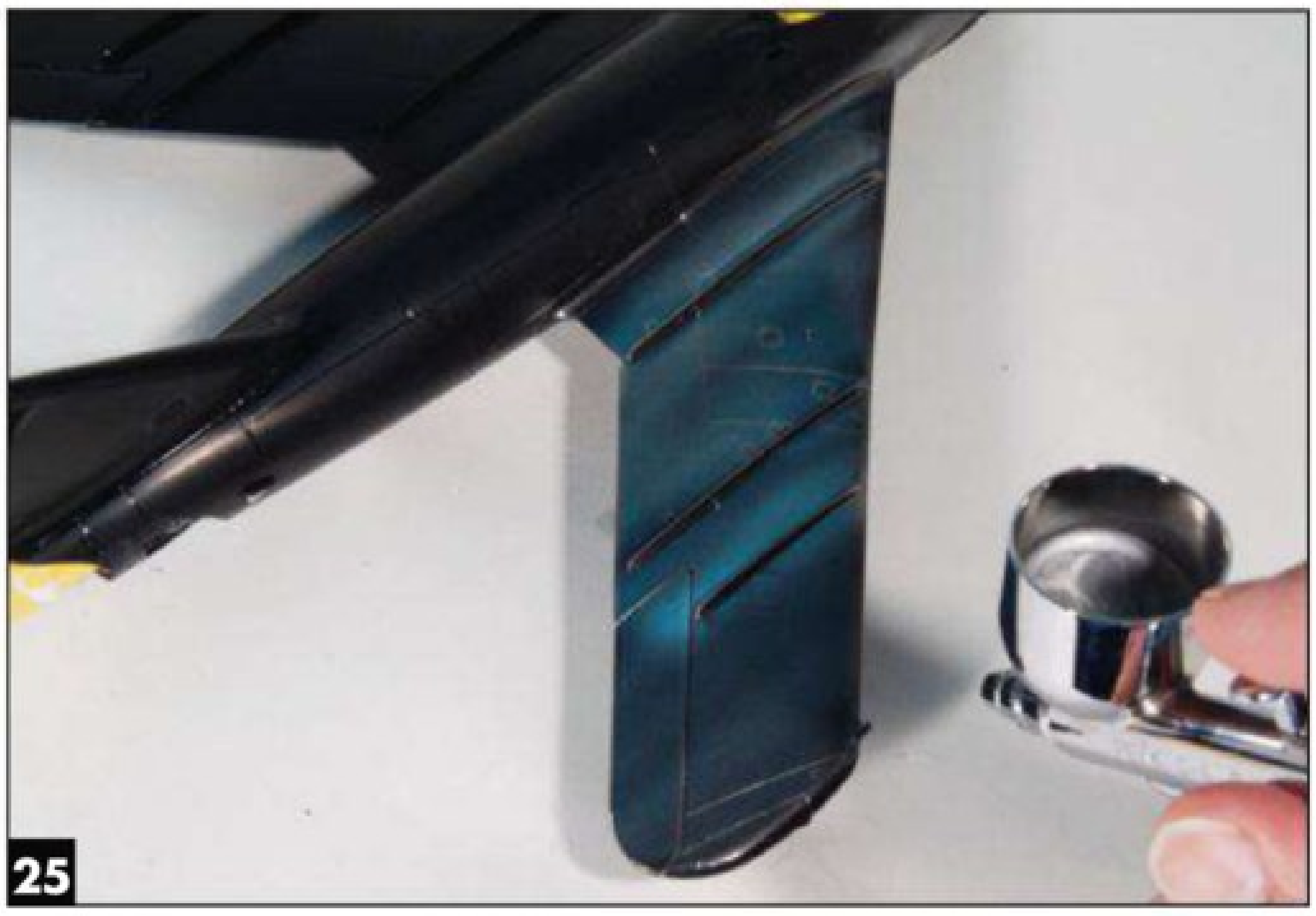


I wet-sanded with Alpha Abrasives pads, working through each grit until the surface was uniform and shiny. You know you're there when you see a clear reflection of a light above your workbench. Grip the model with paper or soft cloth to avoid putting fingerprints in the finish.



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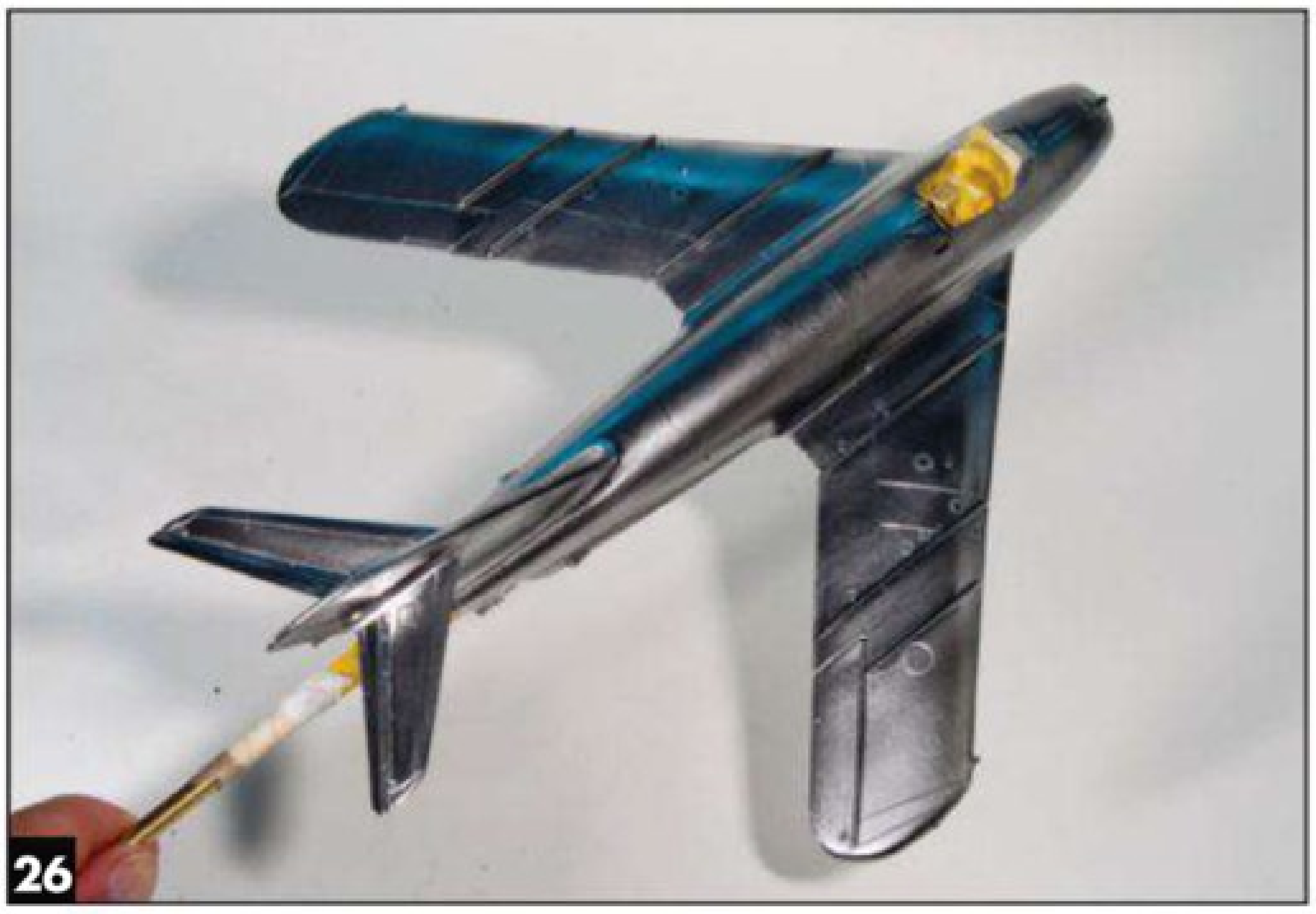
Alclad II lacquers are ready to airbrush straight from the bottle at 12-15psi. I started with a base coat of airframe aluminum (No. ALC-119), moving the brush more like a paintbrush than an airbrush to ensure even coverage. I sprayed four layers; the first was barely discernible against the black.



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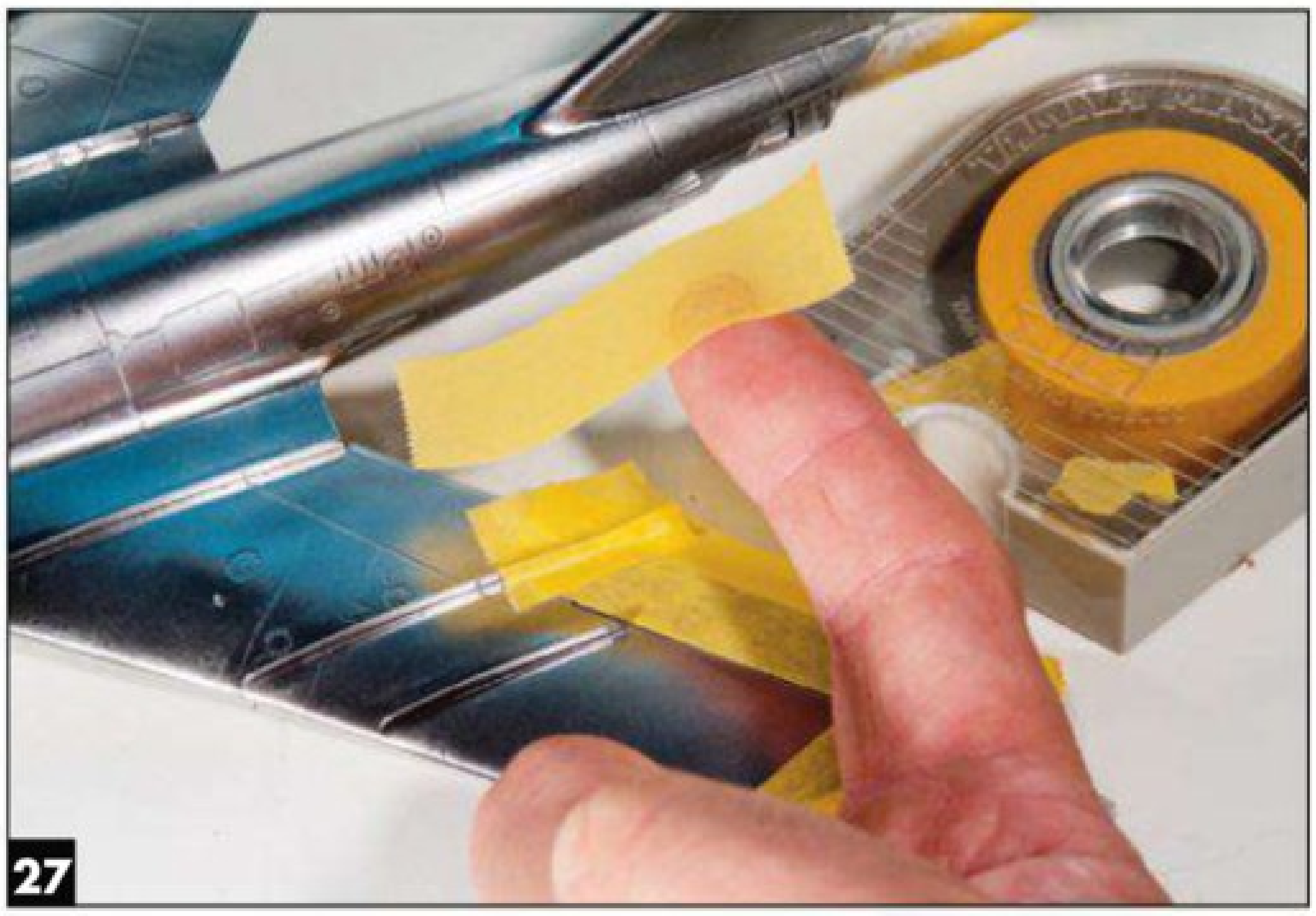
Each subsequent pass built the metallic effect until the model looked like it was made of metal. The magic of Alclad against the black is the depth of the surface. The thin lacquer dries quickly, but I wanted to be sure it was solid for the masking to come, so I set it aside to dry overnight.



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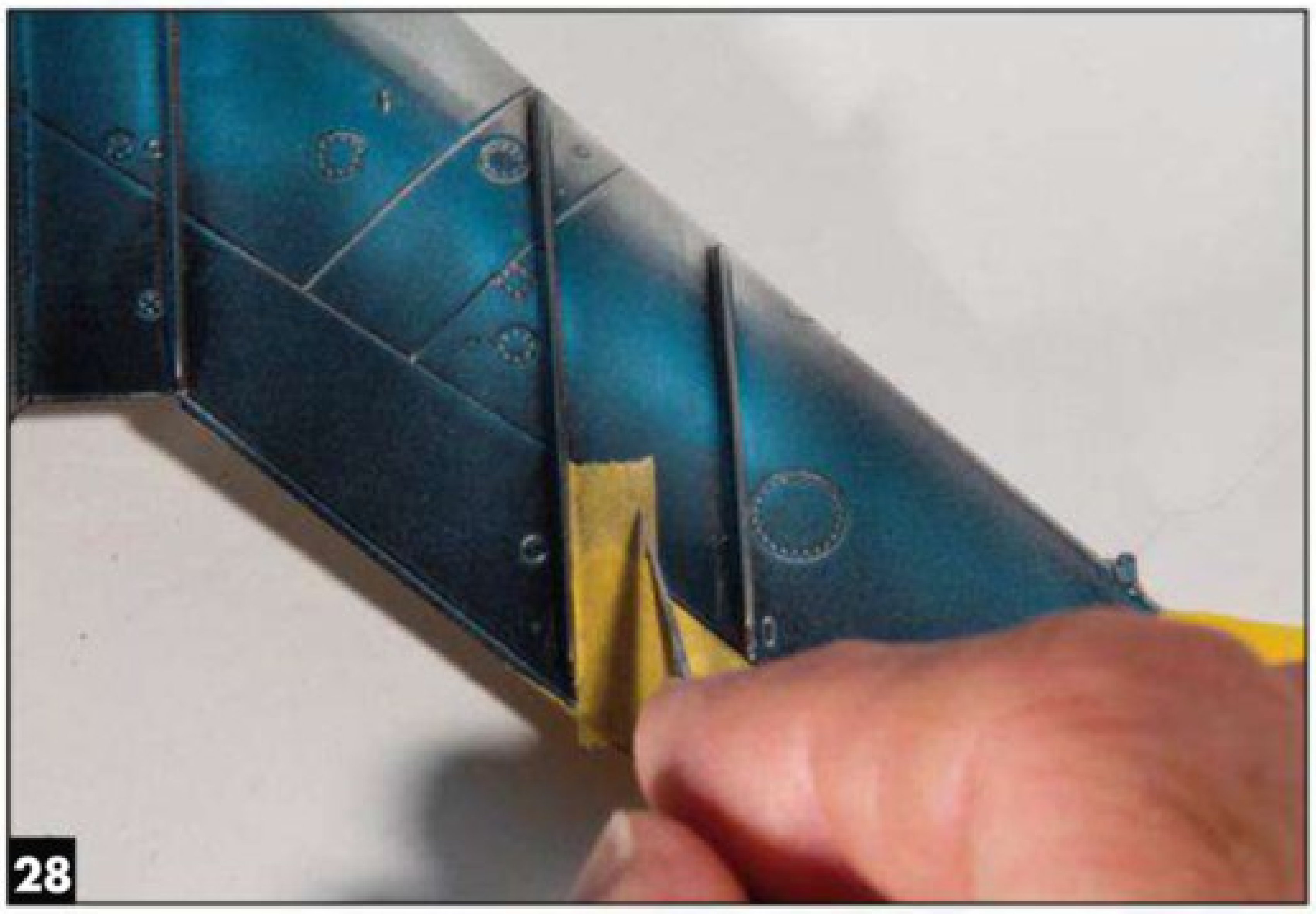
Now it was time to break up the surface with some panel variation. I used Tamiya tape to mask off panels on the wings and fuselage. Tamiya tape is relatively low-tack, and Alclad is pretty durable, but I took the precaution of burnishing the tape only along the paint edge. You can make the tape less tacky by pressing it onto a smooth surface such as glass and removing it a few times before applying it to the model.



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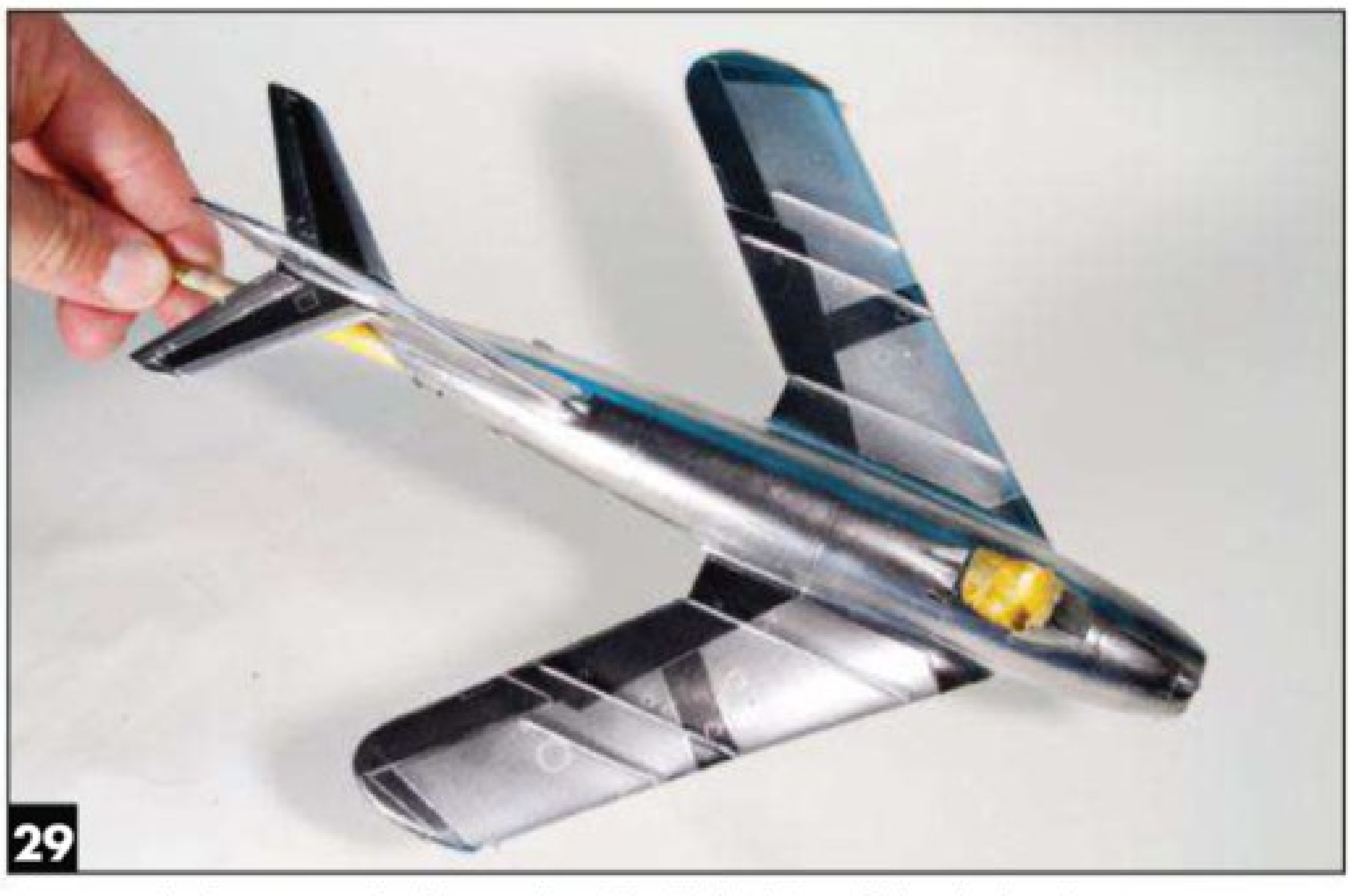
For oddly shaped panels, I pressed the tape into place until the recessed outline became visible as a lighter line. I lightly ran the tip of a brand-new (read *sharp*) No. 11 blade along the line to cut the tape, then pulled the unwanted part off. To avoid damaging the finish, don't press too hard.



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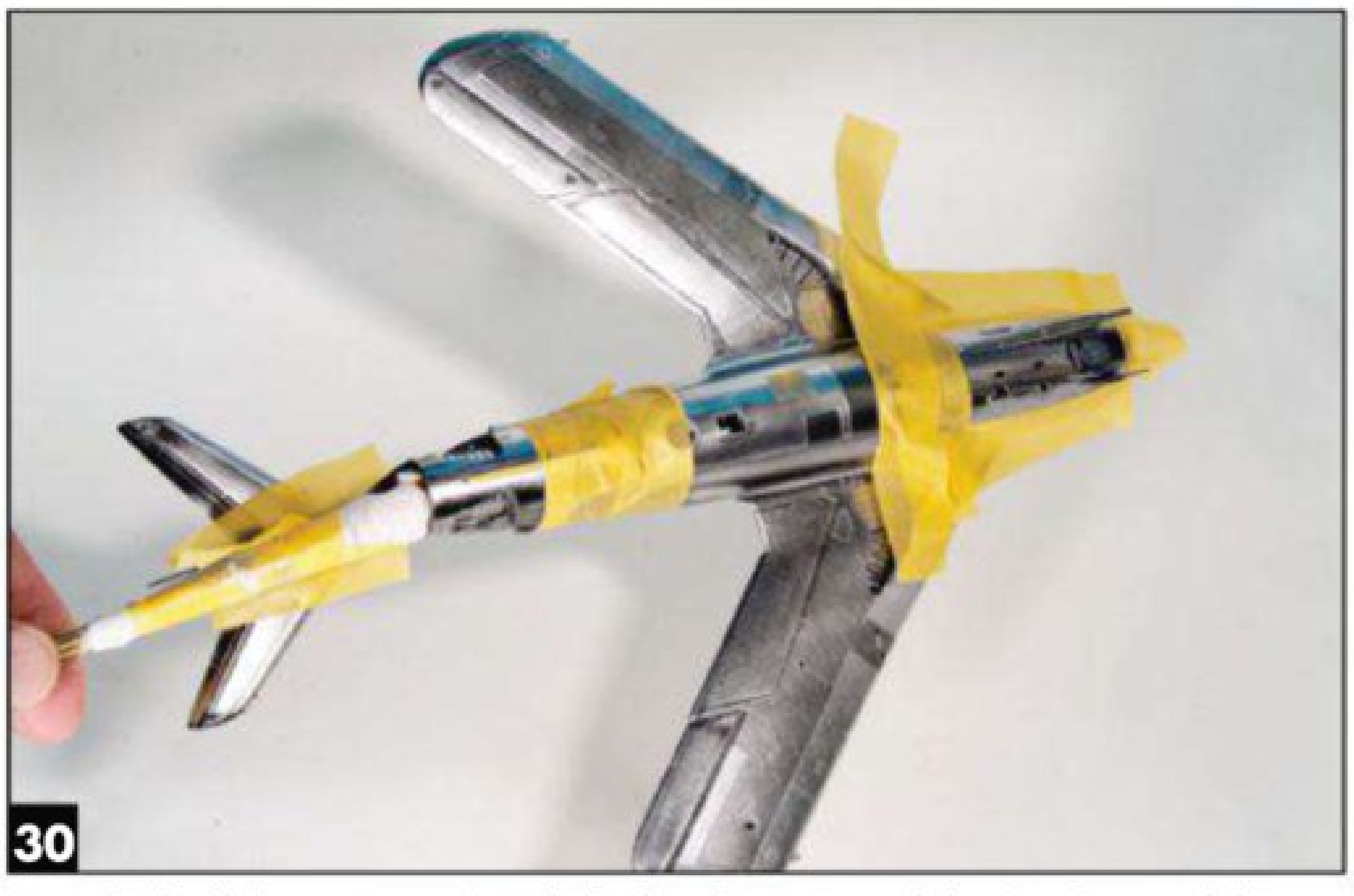
I sprayed the unmasked panels with Alclad II polished aluminum (No. ALC-105), a slightly lighter shade than airframe aluminum. By accident, I discovered that lightly rubbing the polished aluminum with a soft cloth reduced the contrast for a more realistic appearance.



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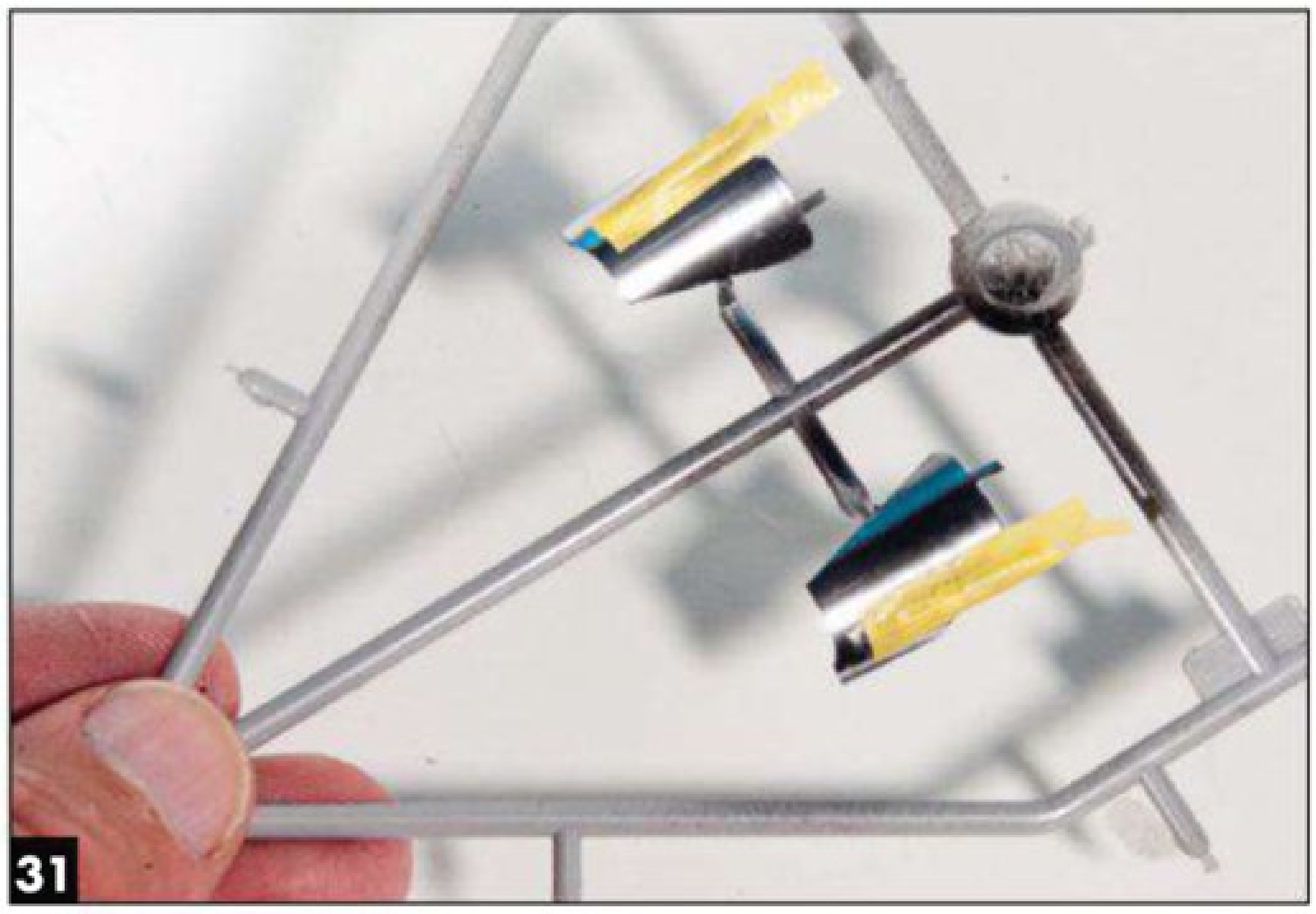
I masked off the rear section of the fuselage around the jet pipe and the gun panel under the nose and airbrushed Testors Model Master Metalizer steel (No. 1402). Metalizer is delicate if used as a base coat, but over Alclad it sticks well. I was able to mask over it without damaging the finish.



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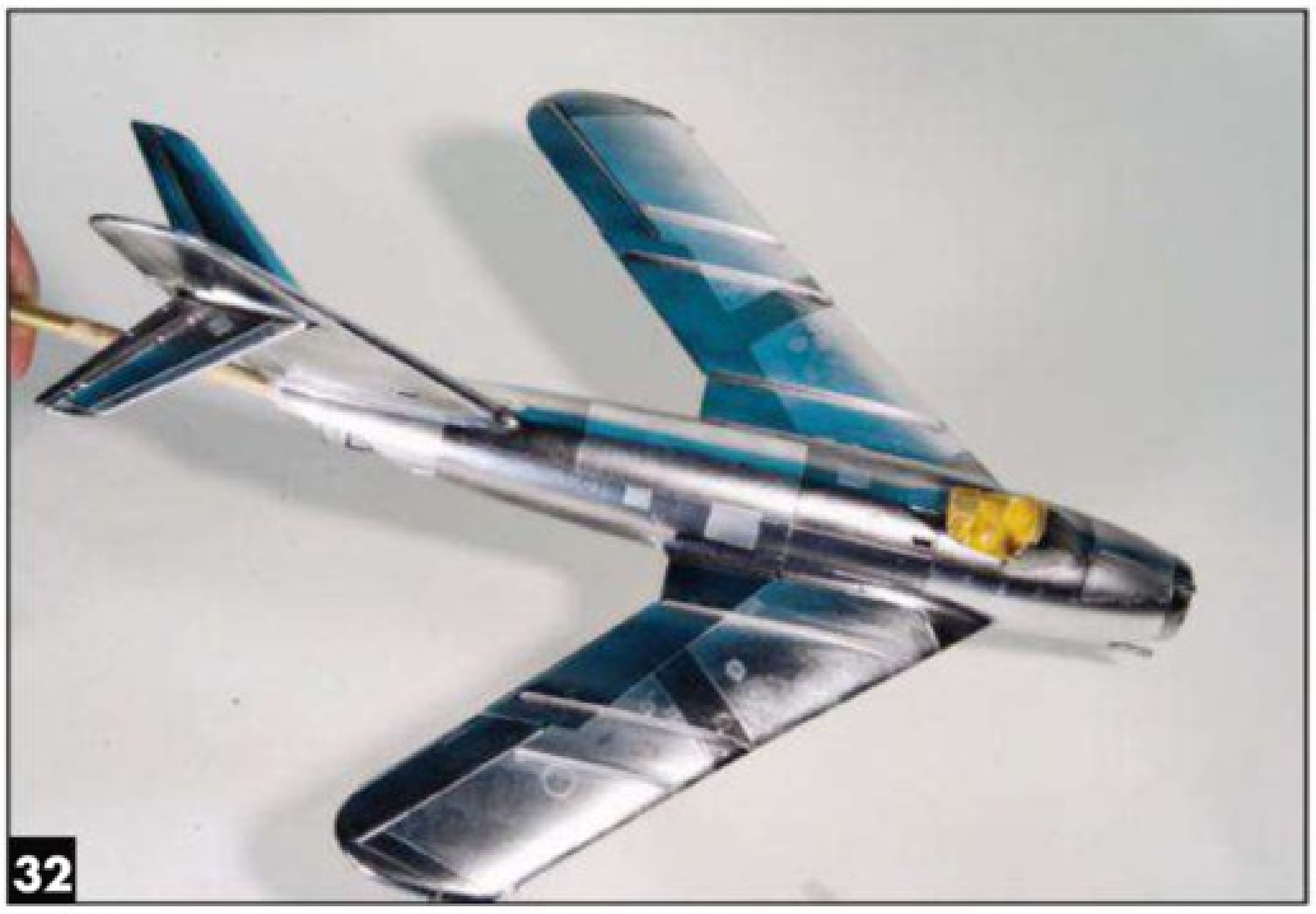
I painted the speed brakes and a muzzle-blast panel under the nose Metalizer dark anodonic gray (No. 1412) to match photos.



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Finally, I masked off several access panels on the fuselage and wings and airbrushed Alclad II white aluminum (No. ALC-106).

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I applied the kit decals, carefully trimming excess carrier film from each marking to be sure it disappeared. To avoid dulling the shine, I didn't seal the decals with a clear coat. So, I wanted them to fit as closely as possible.

34

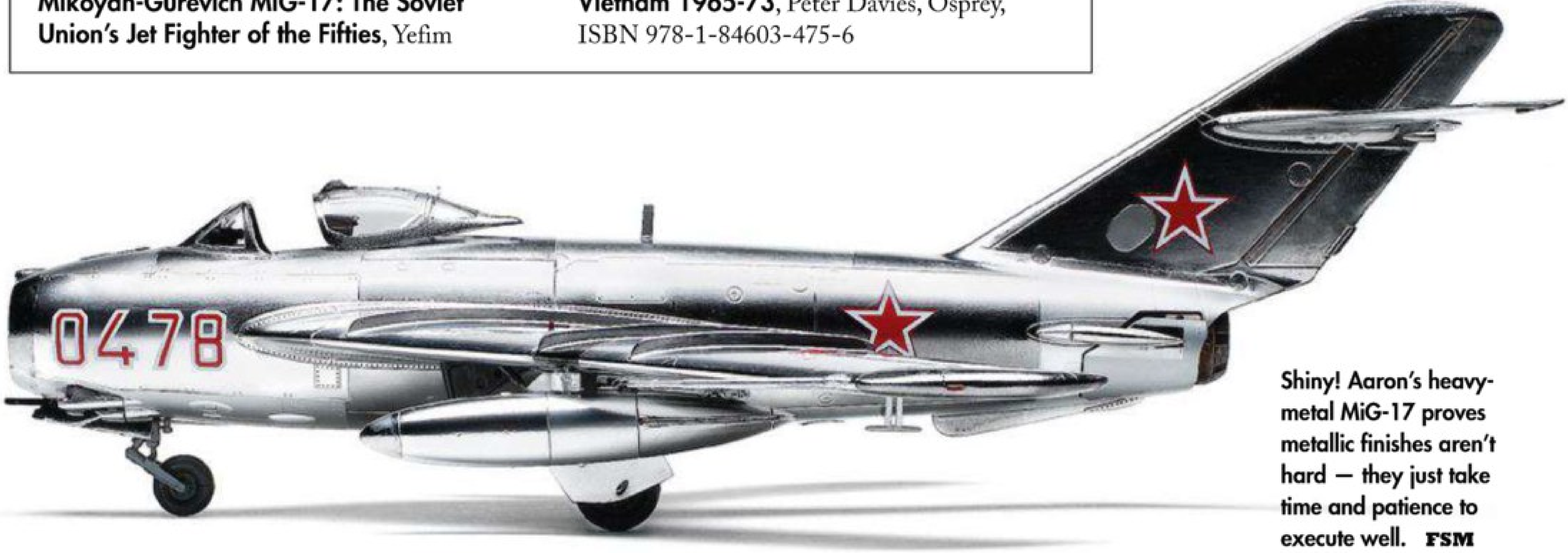
Finger oil will ruin metallic finishes, so I handled the MiG with a soft cloth or paper towel during final stages. After attaching the landing gear, fuel tanks, exhaust, and antennas, I added subtle weathering, such as fluid streaks, using artist's oils and a graphite pencil.

REFERENCES

MiG-17 Fresco in action, Hans-Heiri Stapfer, Squadron/Signal, ISBN 978-0-89747-277-7

Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-17: The Soviet Union's Jet Fighter of the Fifties, Yefim Gordon, Midland, ISBN 978-1-85780-107-1

USN F-4 Phantom II vs VPAF MiG-17/19 Vietnam 1965-73, Peter Davies, Osprey, ISBN 978-1-84603-475-6

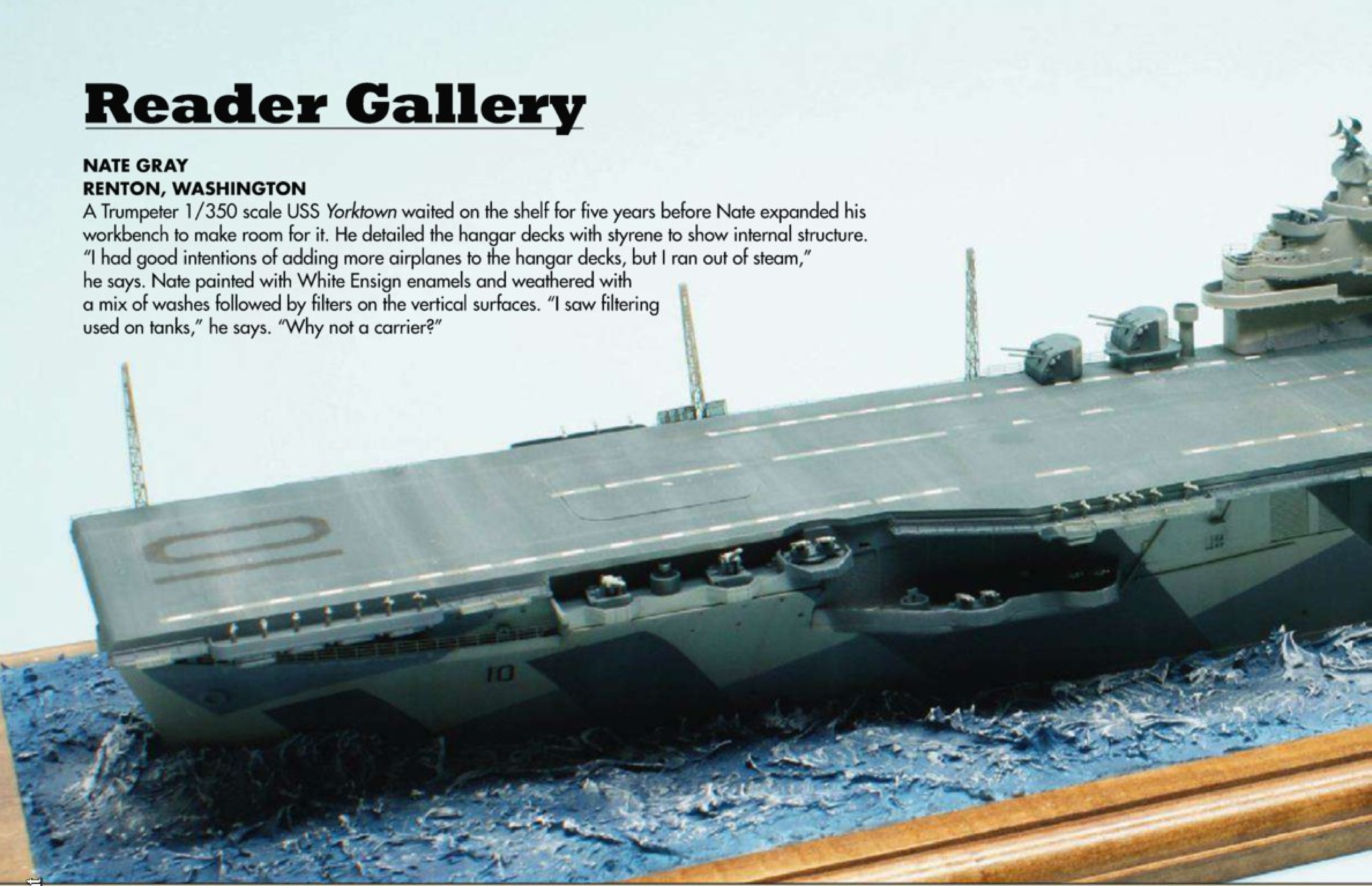


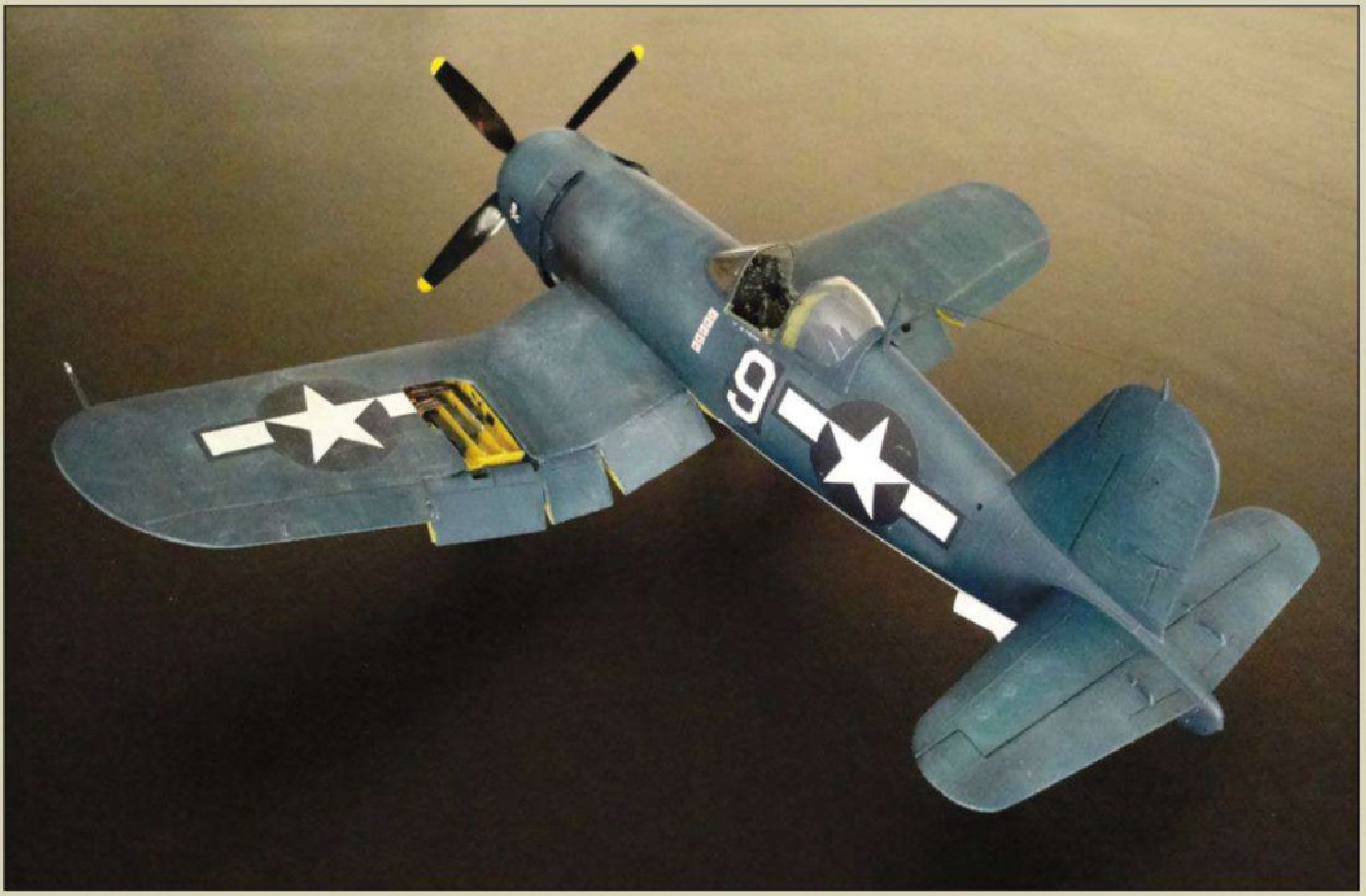
Shiny! Aaron's heavy-metal MiG-17 proves metallic finishes aren't hard — they just take time and patience to execute well. **FSM**

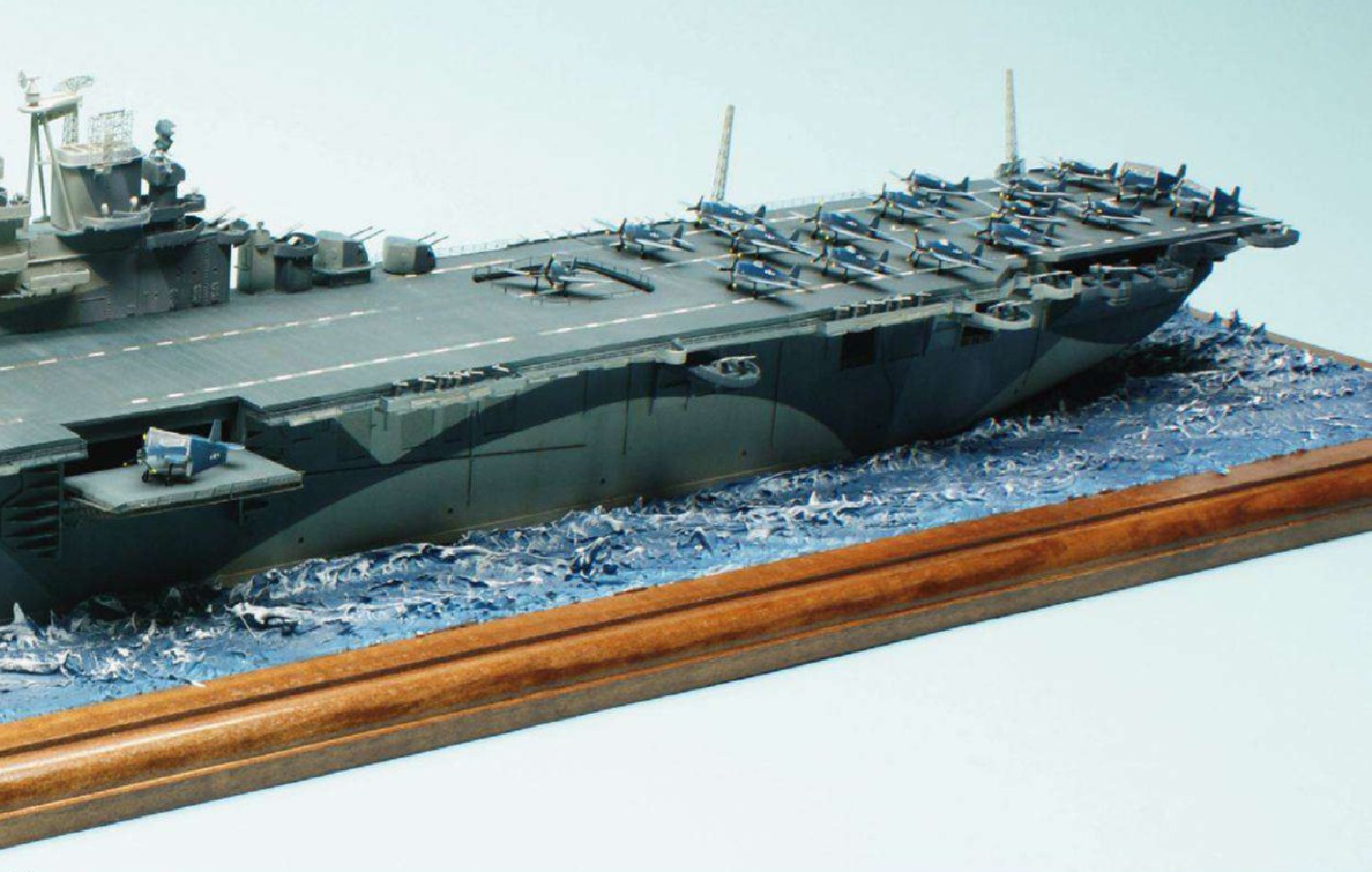
Reader Gallery

NATE GRAY
RENTON, WASHINGTON

A Trumpeter 1/350 scale USS *Yorktown* waited on the shelf for five years before Nate expanded his workbench to make room for it. He detailed the hangar decks with styrene to show internal structure. "I had good intentions of adding more airplanes to the hangar decks, but I ran out of steam," he says. Nate painted with White Ensign enamels and weathered with a mix of washes followed by filters on the vertical surfaces. "I saw filtering used on tanks," he says. "Why not a carrier?"

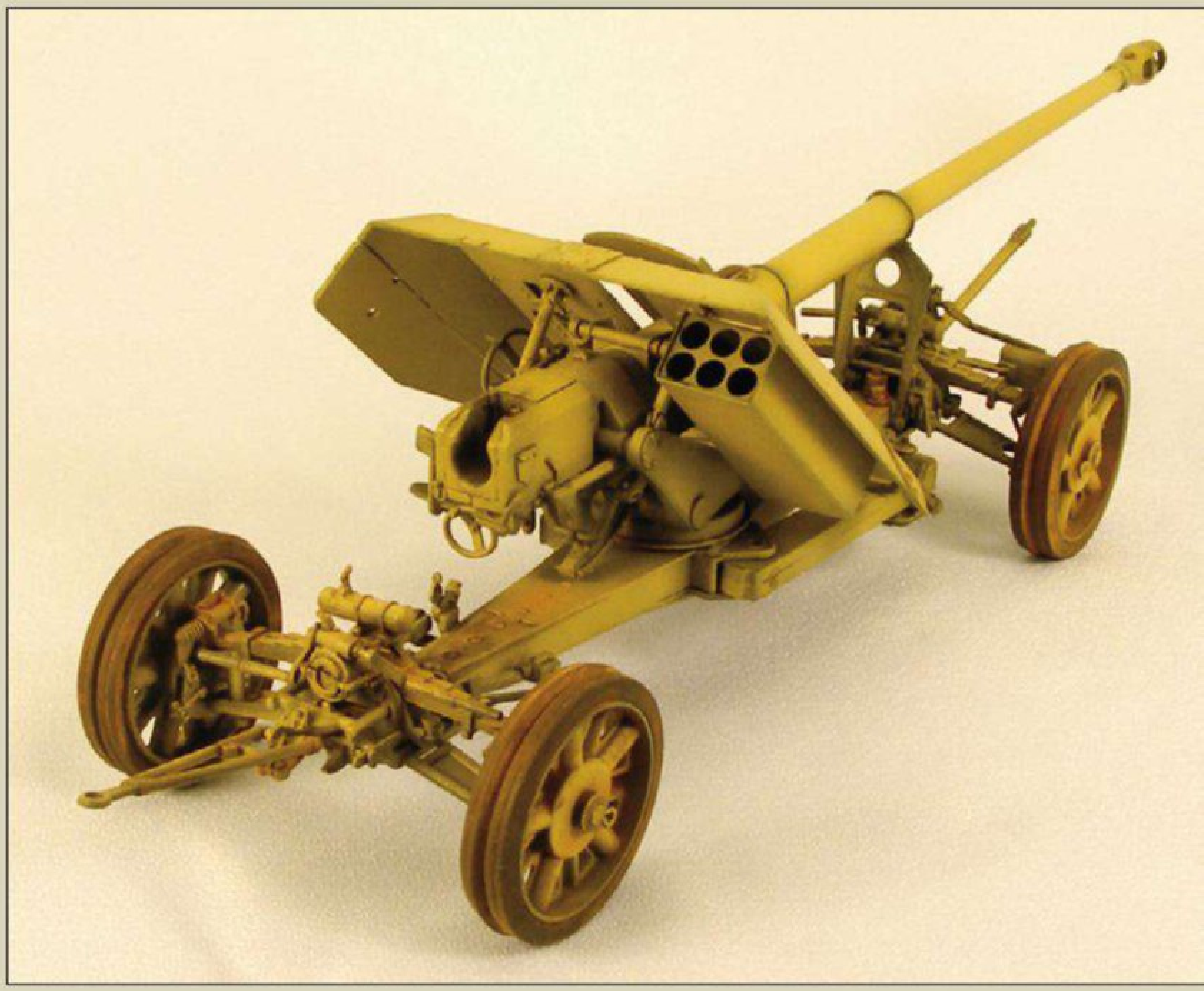






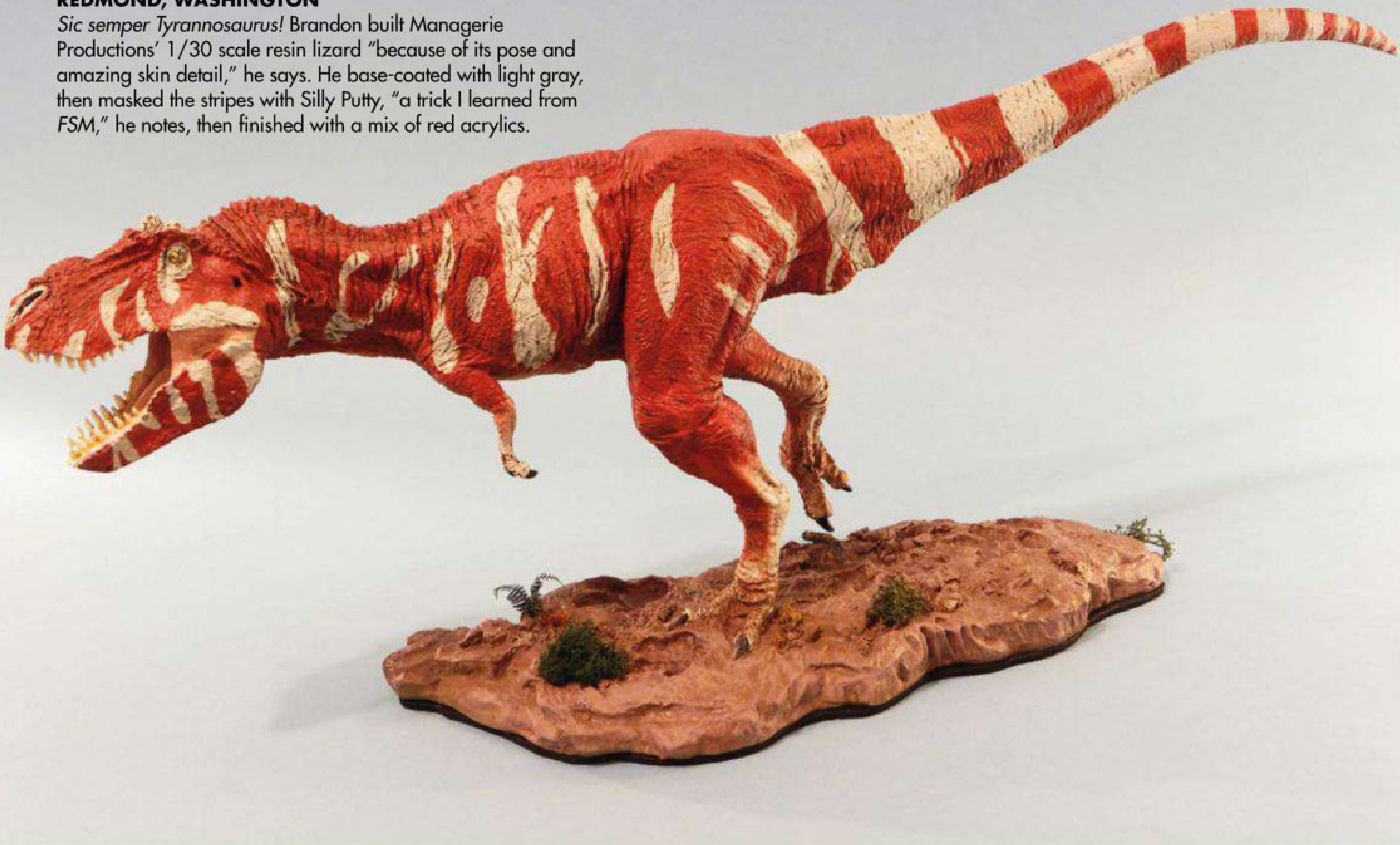
◀ BENJAMIN KONCZAL
NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS
Benjamin coveted Verlinden's superdetail set for Hasegawa's 1/48 scale F4U-4 Corsair. "I really wanted its flaps down," he says. "Also, I like the look of the four-blade prop. I realize this plane wasn't flown in World War II by the Jolly Rogers, but I don't care. I purchased a decal set with those markings." Benjamin cut up the kit to display the gun bay and cowling flaps, and modified parts to accommodate the resin flaps. "The paint job was the big deal on this one," he says. His first attempt at "dot filtering" with artist's oils went badly. "I had to start over on the wings a couple of times, but eventually I found a combination that worked," he says.

▶ ERIC CHRISTIANSON
REDMOND, WASHINGTON
"The look and complexity of towed artillery really appealed to me," Eric says of his inspiration to build Trumpeter's 1/35 scale German 8.8cm Panzerjagerkanone PaK43. He painted it with "a mix of Tamiya deck tan and dark yellow over dark yellow over NATO black," he says, then applied a Mig dark wash and weathered with Mig European earth and black smoke pigments.

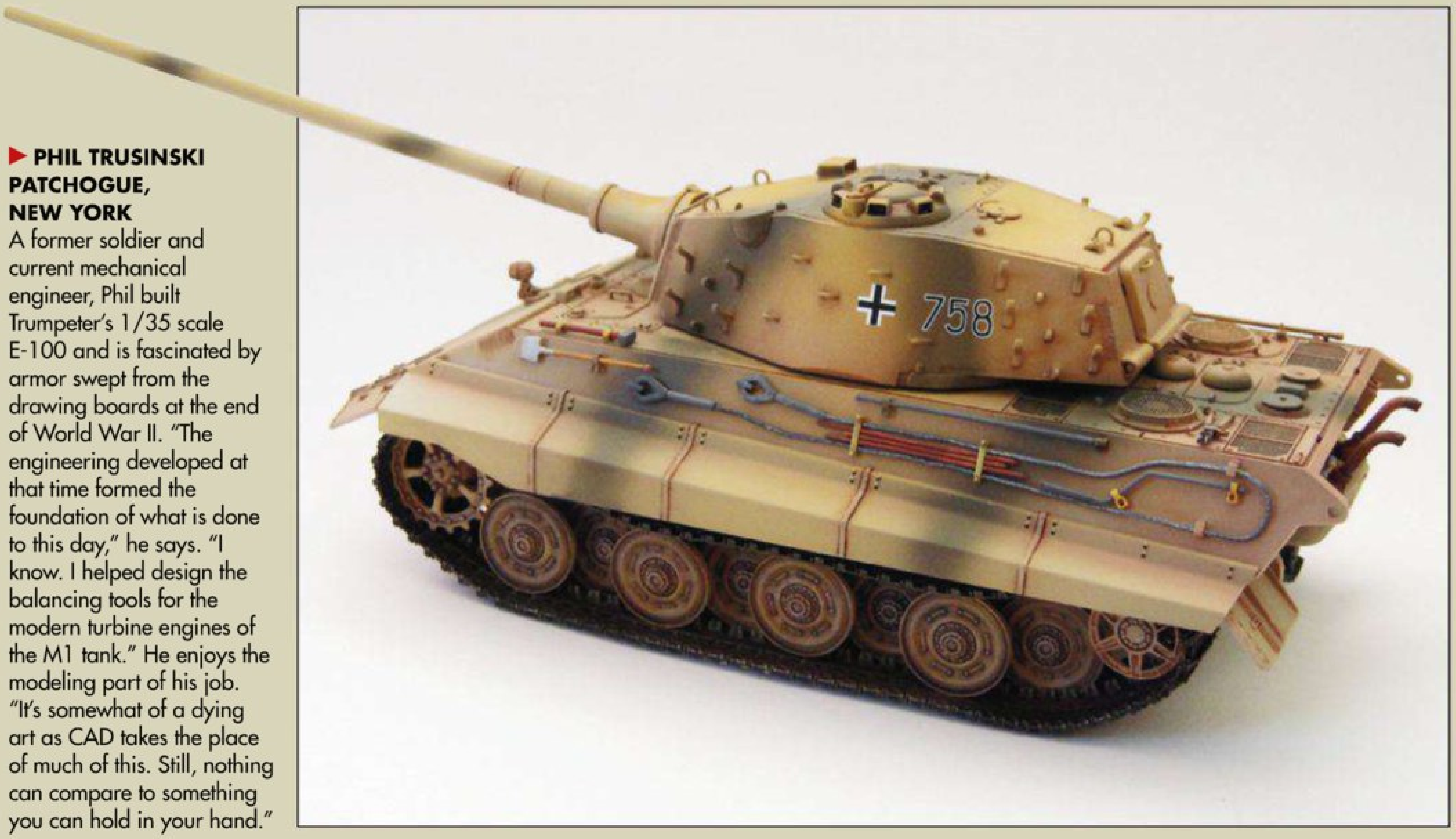


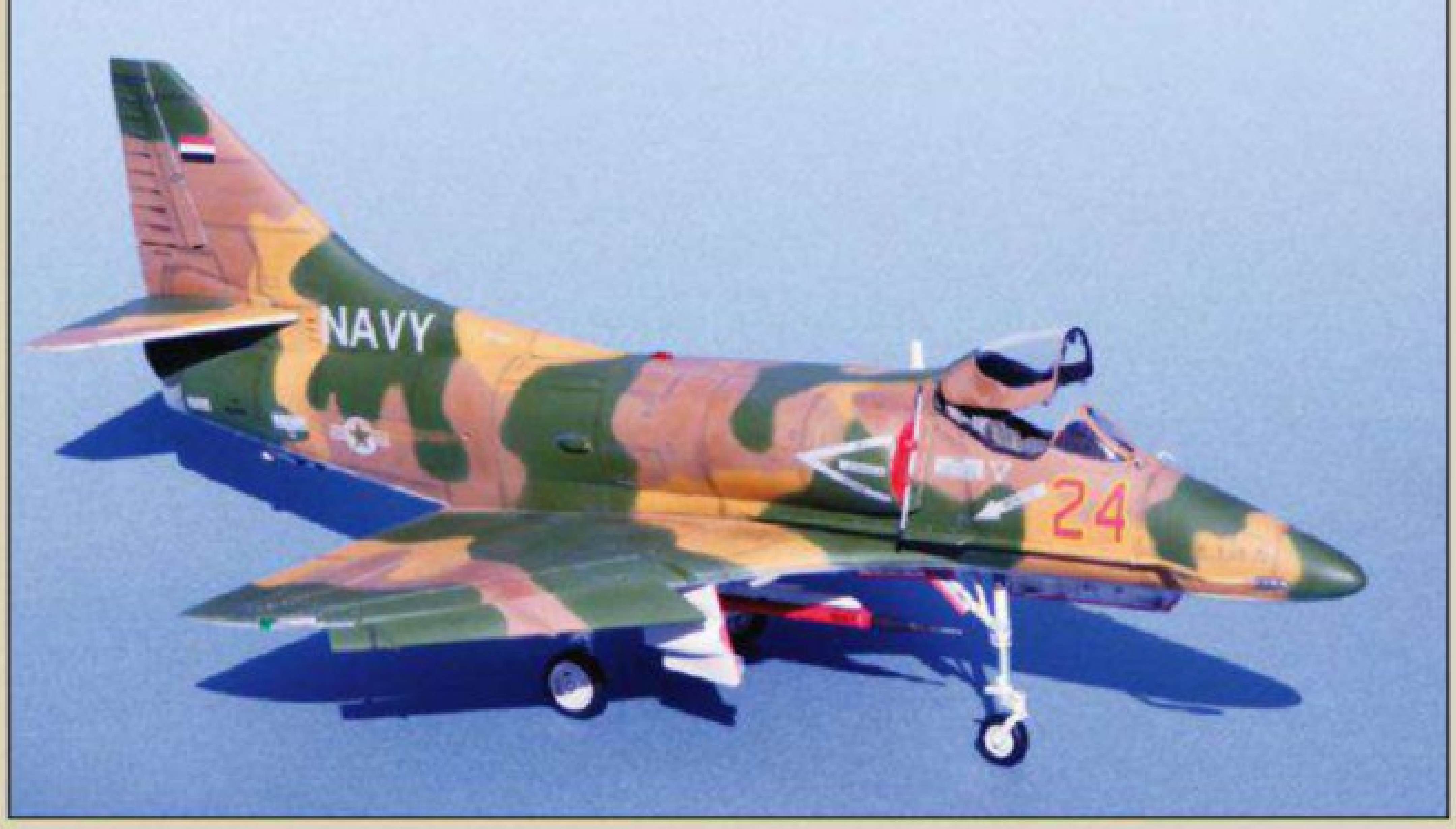
Reader Gallery

BRANDON CHUTICH
REDMOND, WASHINGTON
Sic semper Tyrannosaurus! Brandon built Managerie Productions' 1/30 scale resin lizard "because of its pose and amazing skin detail," he says. He base-coated with light gray, then masked the stripes with Silly Putty, "a trick I learned from *FSM*," he notes, then finished with a mix of red acrylics.



▶ PHIL TRUSINSKI
PATCHOGUE,
NEW YORK
A former soldier and current mechanical engineer, Phil built Trumpeter's 1/35 scale E-100 and is fascinated by armor swept from the drawing boards at the end of World War II. "The engineering developed at that time formed the foundation of what is done to this day," he says. "I know. I helped design the balancing tools for the modern turbine engines of the M1 tank." He enjoys the modeling part of his job. "It's somewhat of a dying art as CAD takes the place of much of this. Still, nothing can compare to something you can hold in your hand."





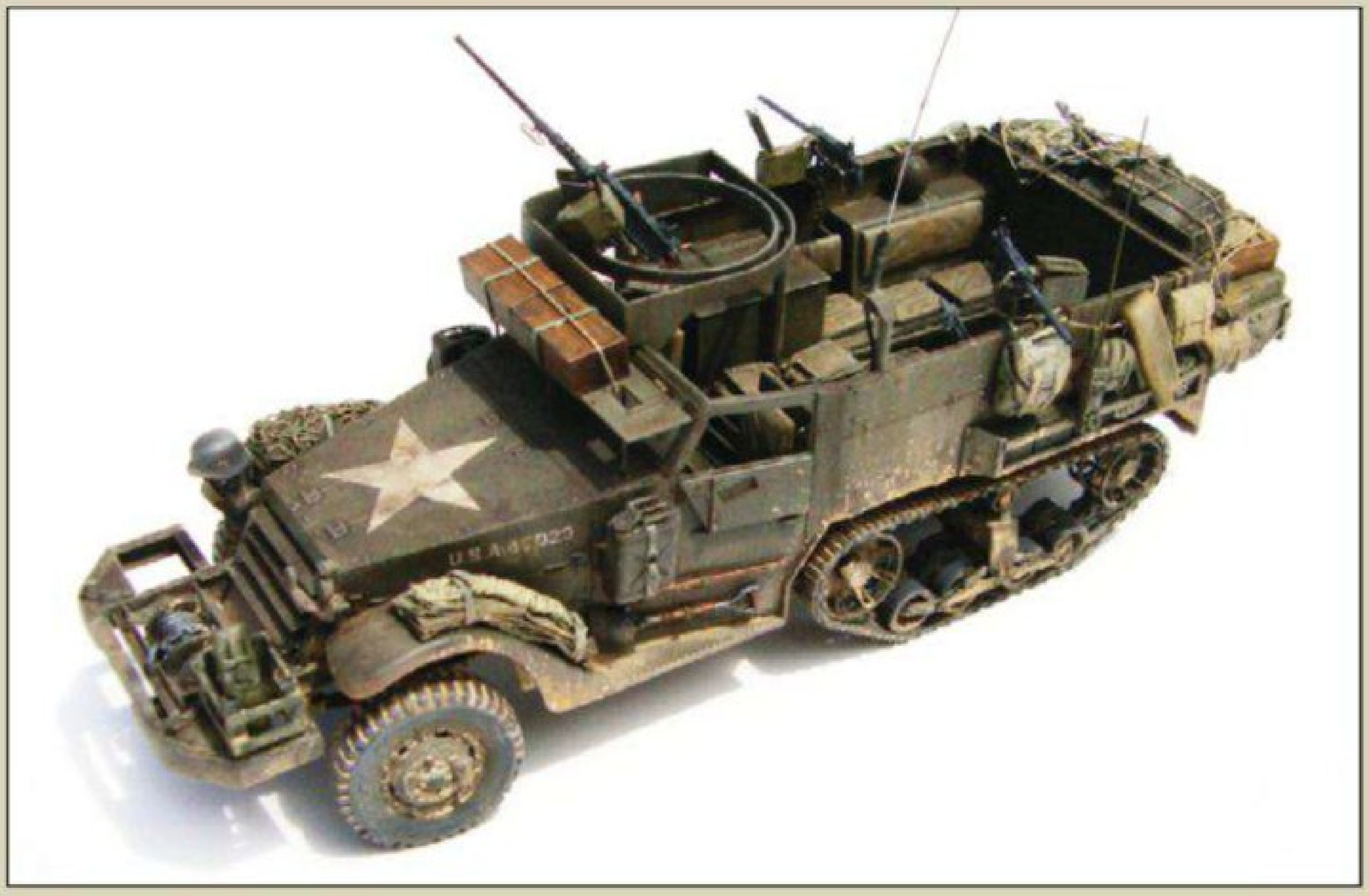
◀ **JIM PRICE**
STOCKBRIDGE, GEORGIA
"The Scooter has always been one of my favorites, and it's even more interesting in the unusual paint," says Jim, who built Hasegawa's 1/48 scale A-4E/F as an E and put it in an aggressor scheme from NAS Miramar. He detailed the cockpit with a True Details ejection seat and Eduard instrument panel, fitted Steel Beach FOD covers on the intakes, and made his own exhaust cover.

SEND US YOUR PICTURES!

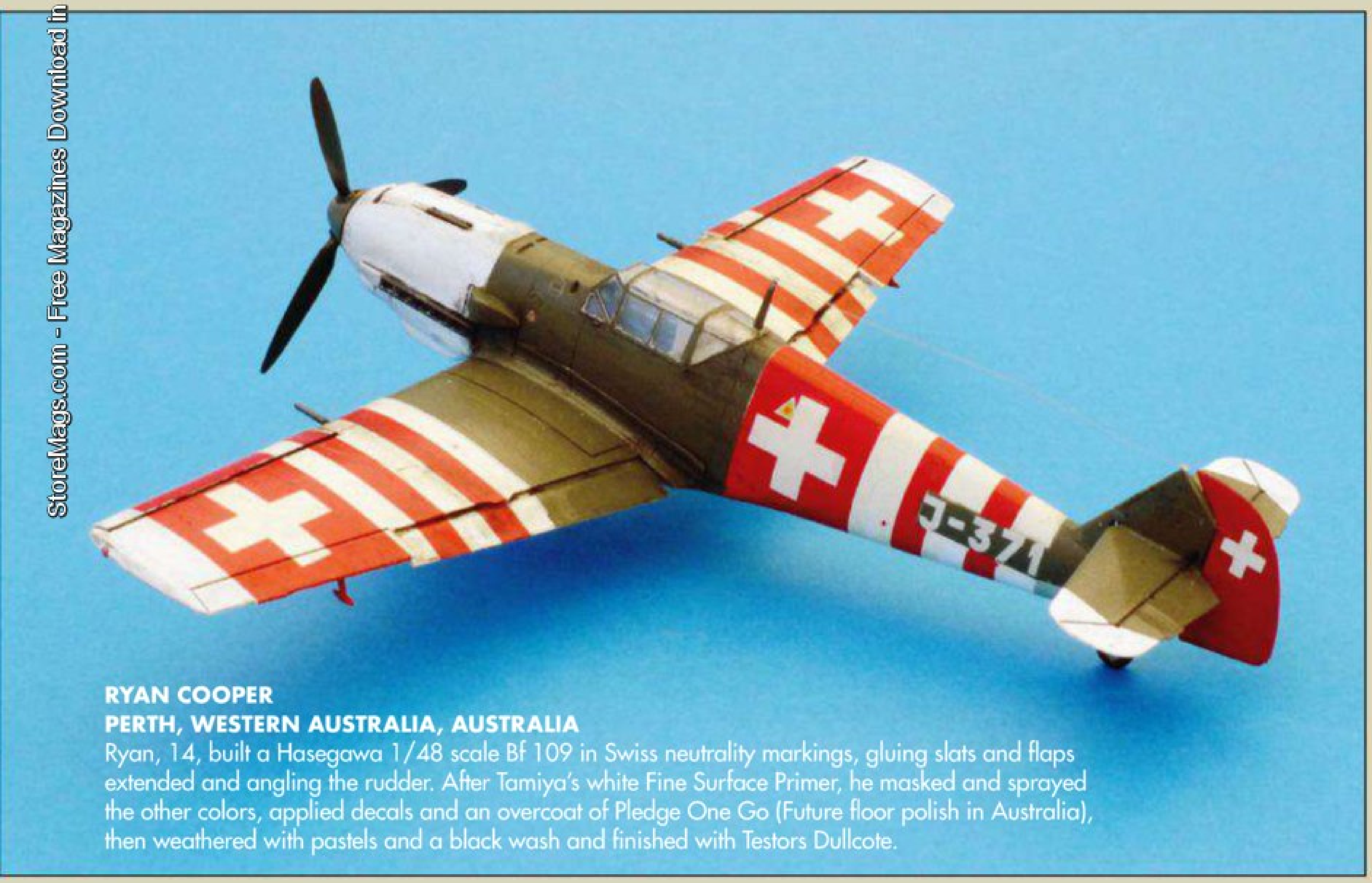
Shouldn't your model be in Reader Gallery? *FineScale Modeler* is always accepting new material from around the world.

Upload high-resolution digital images (preferably unedited, RAW format) with complete captions at www.Contribute.Kalmbach.com, or send prints or CD-ROMs to *FineScale Modeler*, Reader Gallery, 21027 Crossroads Circle, P.O. Box 1612, Waukesha, WI 53187-1612.

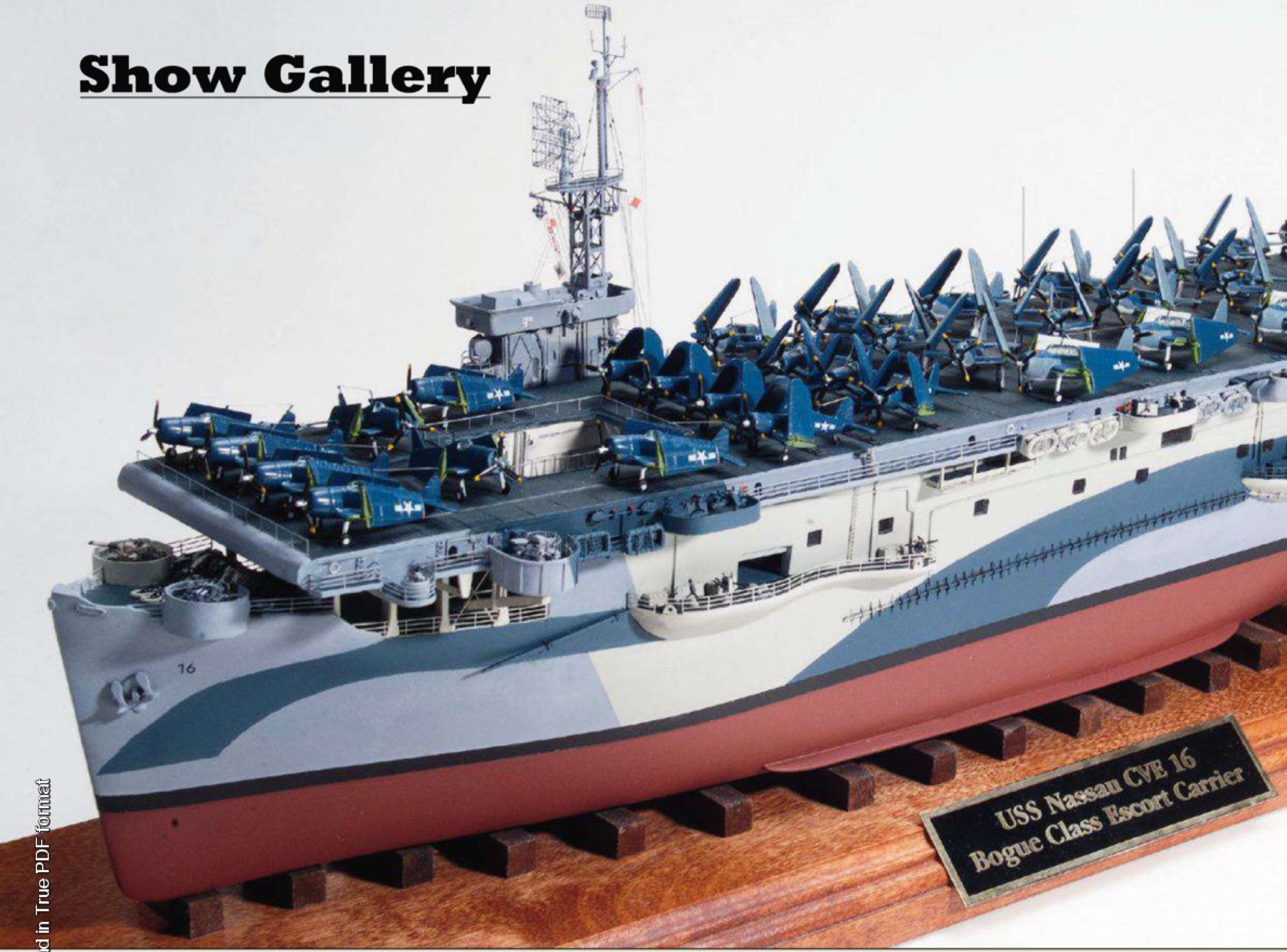
Be sure to tell us the kit manufacturer, model, scale, modifications, paint and finishes used, and why you chose the model, along with your name and address. We look forward to seeing your work!



▲ **ADAM KULLER**
VENTURA, CALIFORNIA
Adam used Milliput, styrene, foil, and brass to build crates, stowage, a camo net, tarps, a canvas water bucket, stowage, and mine racks for Dragon's 1/35 scale 2-in-1 M2/M2A1 halftrack. He still found room for LionRoar photoetched-metal details, machine-gun barrels from RB Models and Eureka, resin front wheels from Tank Workshop, a winch cable made from braided wire, and markings from Archer.



RYAN COOPER
PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA, AUSTRALIA
Ryan, 14, built a Hasegawa 1/48 scale Bf 109 in Swiss neutrality markings, gluing slats and flaps extended and angling the rudder. After Tamiya's white Fine Surface Primer, he masked and sprayed the other colors, applied decals and an overcoat of Pledge One Go (Future floor polish in Australia), then weathered with pastels and a black wash and finished with Testors Dullcote.

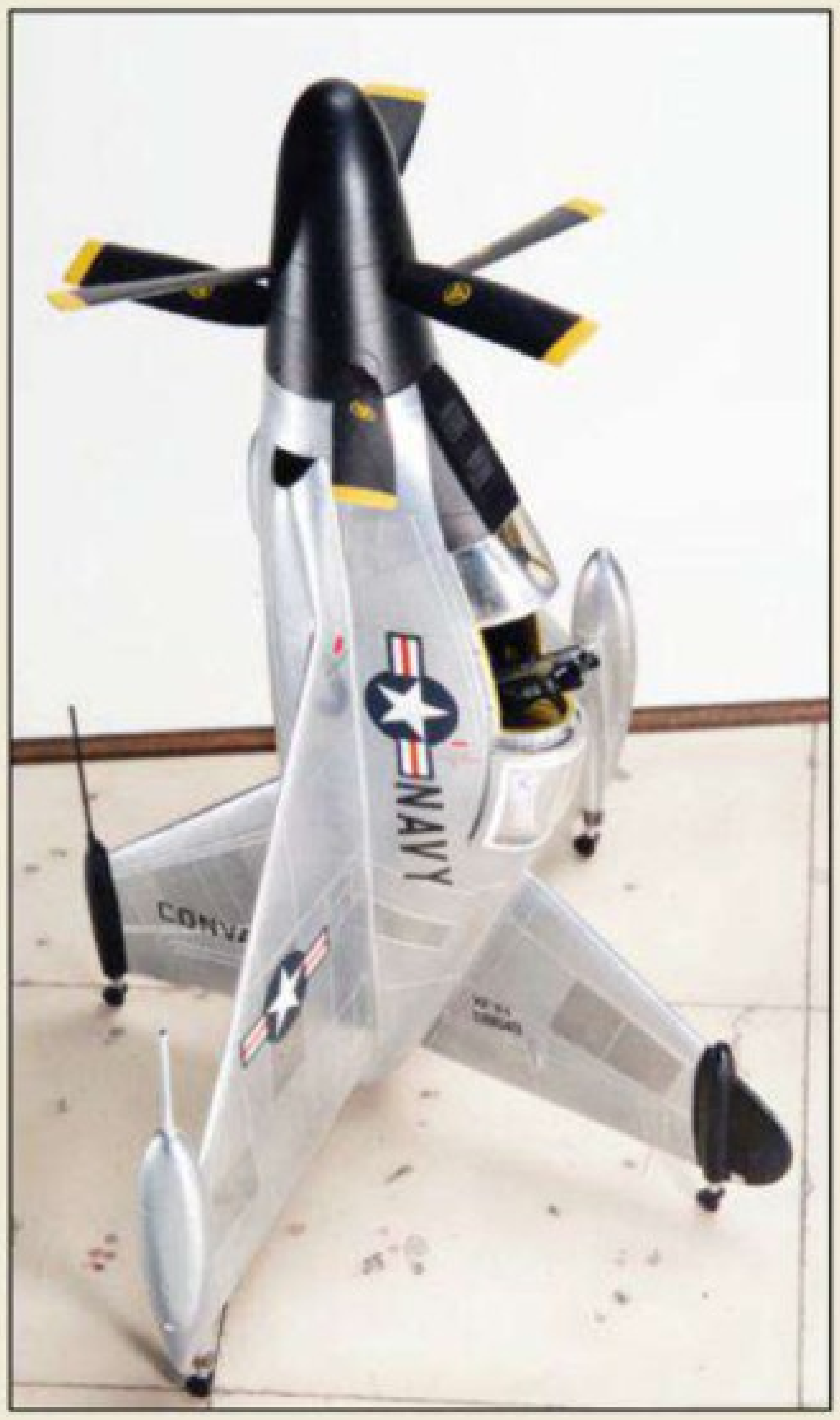


IPMS/USA Nationals 2011

The International Plastic Modelers Society/USA national convention in Omaha, Neb., Aug. 3–6, 2011, attracted builders from across the country as well as around the world. More than 700 modelers entered, and more than 2,400 models were displayed.

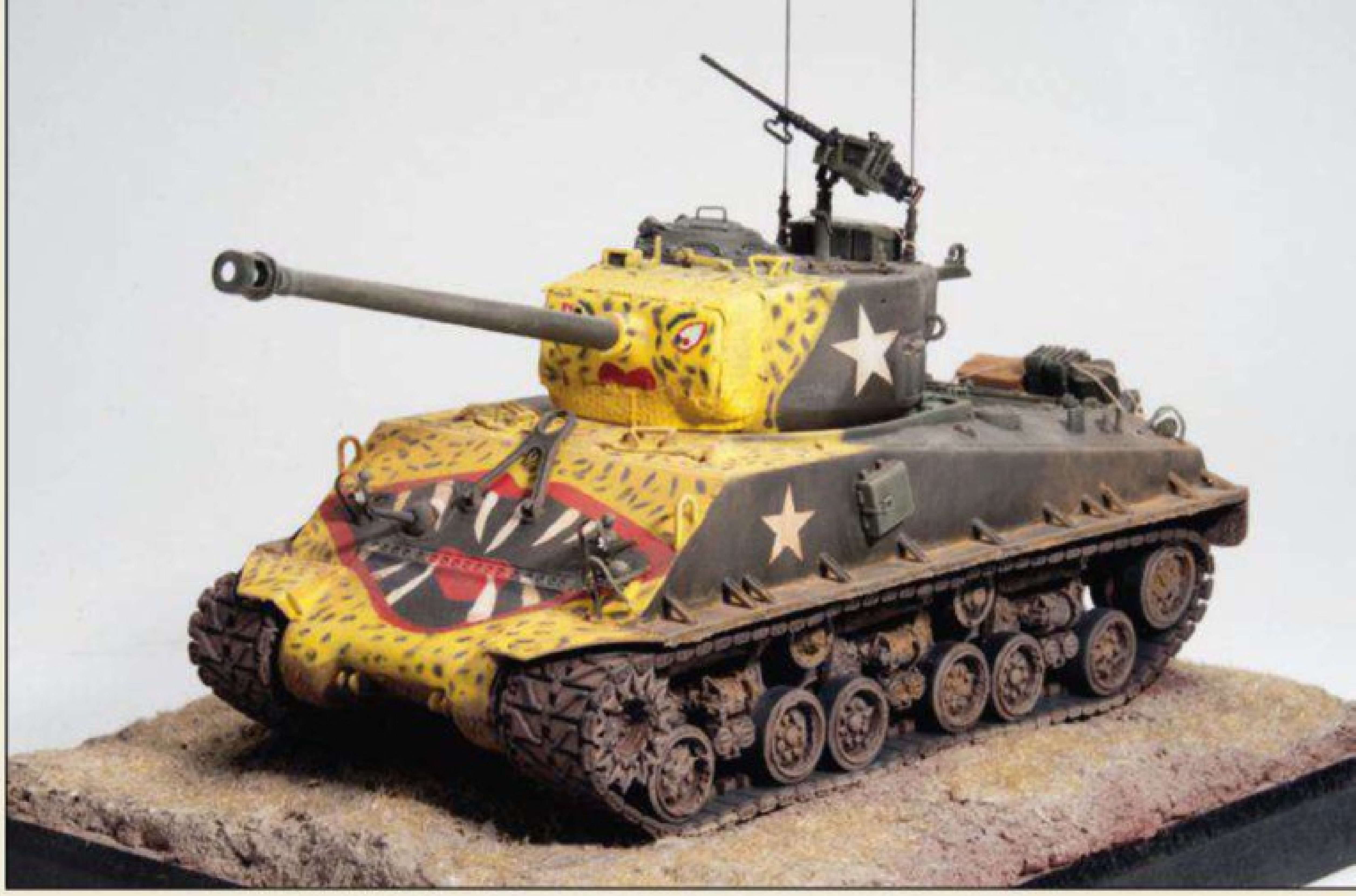
If you've never been to the Nationals, take the time to do so. Even if you don't enter, chances are you'll be inspired to get back to your workbench. The 2012 show will be held at the Disney Contemporary resort in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., Aug. 8–11.

***FSM* editors Matthew Usher and Aaron Skinner travelled to the Omaha show. Here are a few of the scale creations they saw.**

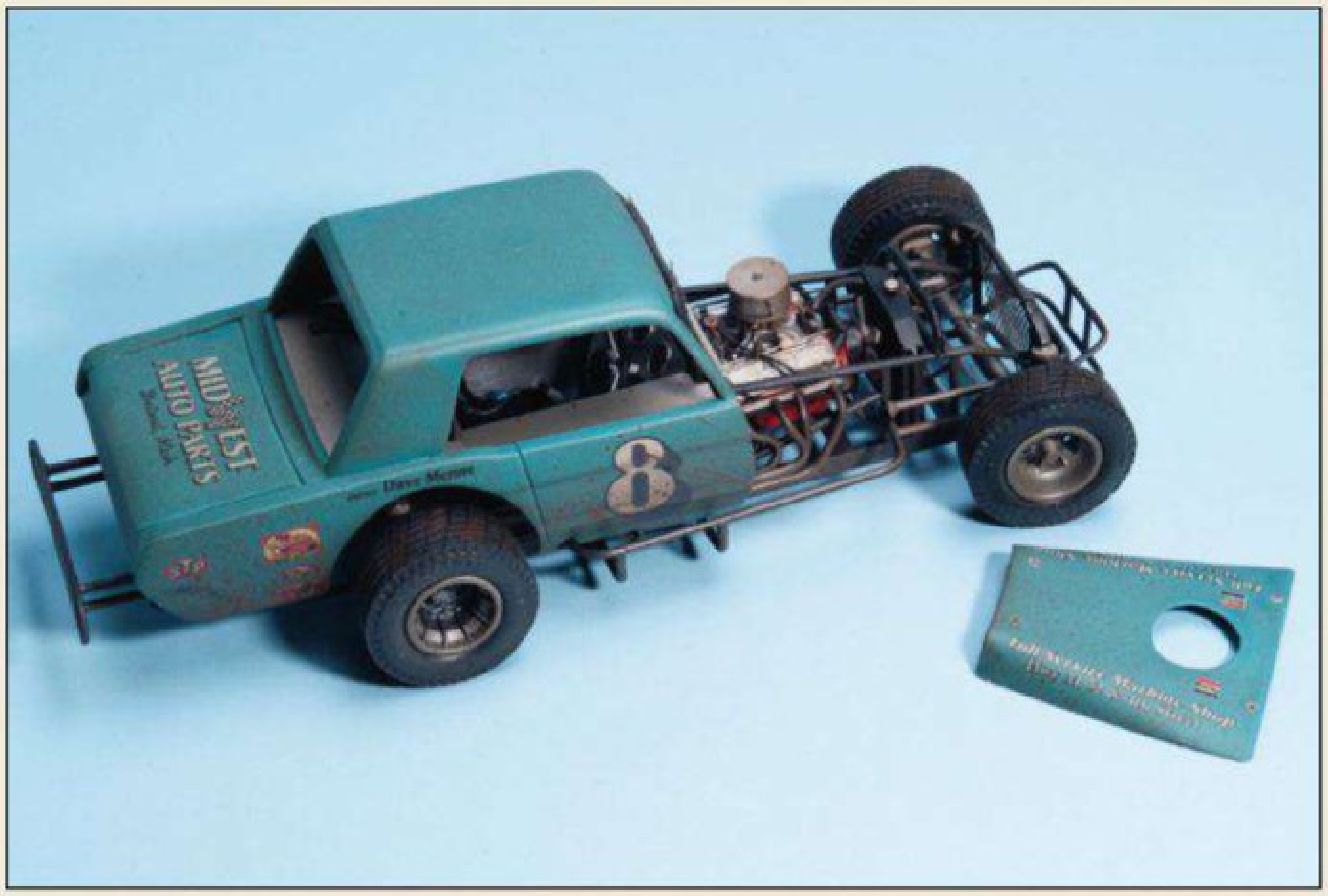


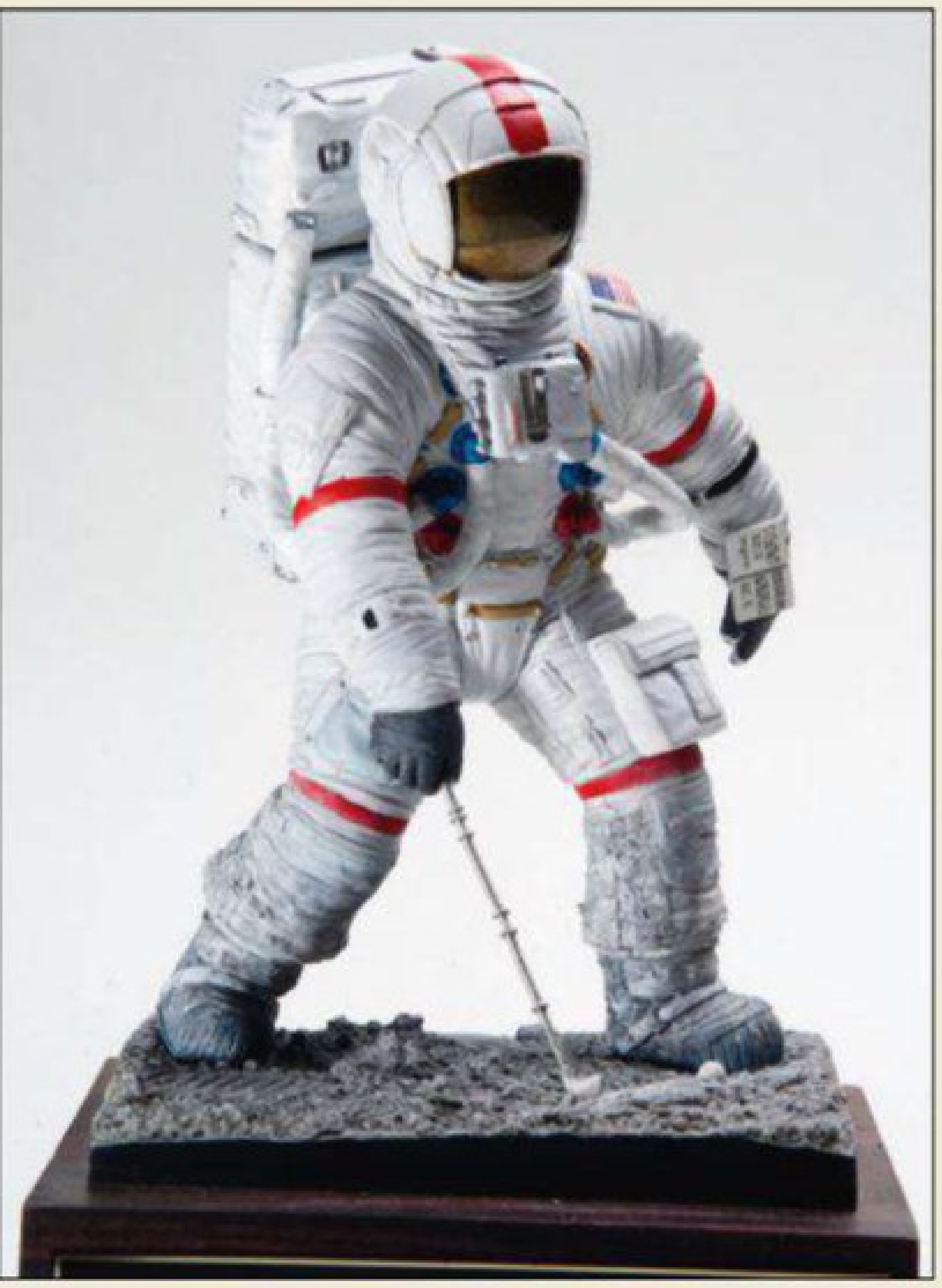
▲ **RODNEY MEAD**
MOSCOW, IDAHO
Inspired by the story of the USS *Nassau*, told by Wilbur A. Zink in his book *The Little Princess*, Rodney scratchbuilt the *Bogue*-class escort carrier with Evergreen styrene strip, sheet, and V-groove siding. He detailed the 1/350 scale model with photoetched metal from Gold Medal Models and Yankee Modelworks. L'Arsenal provided 40mm anti-aircraft guns, whaleboats, and signal lights, and Tom's Modelworks made the radar dishes and hatches. Rodney applied Starfighter decals to Trumpeter Hellcats, Corsairs, Helldivers, and Avengers to fill the flight deck.

◀ **KEVIN SUDDARTH**
COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO
Lindberg's 1/48 scale Convair XFY-1 Pogo is an old kit that can be made to look good, as Kevin proved, but it takes a lot of work. He scratchbuilt a cockpit — the kit had none to speak of — and opened the canopy to show it off. He also reworked the exhaust section. After sanding off hundreds of raised rivets and scribing panel lines, Kevin painted the model with SnJ Spray Metal. He combined kit decals with some from Microscale to mark the experimental fighter.



▲ TONY HIGGS
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
"I have seen the tiger-face tanks for years and finally decided to paint one," Tony says of his 1/35 scale M4A3E8 Sherman. He dressed up the Academy kit with an RB turned-metal gun barrel, several resin detail sets from Formations, Eduard photoetched metal, and some scratchbuilt styrene bits. The Easy Eight is marked as a vehicle from the 89th Tank Battalion during the 1951 winter offensive in the Korean War.

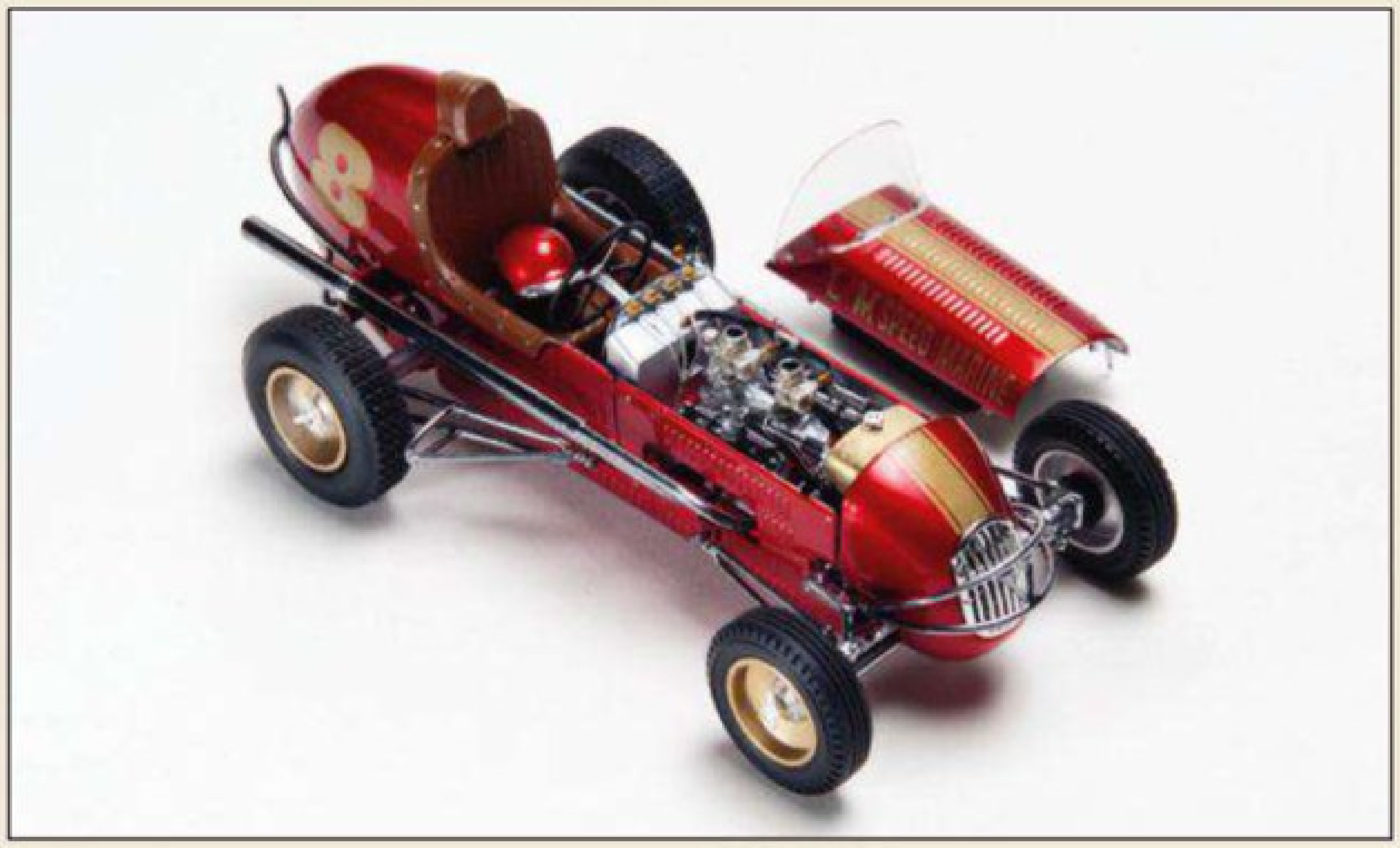




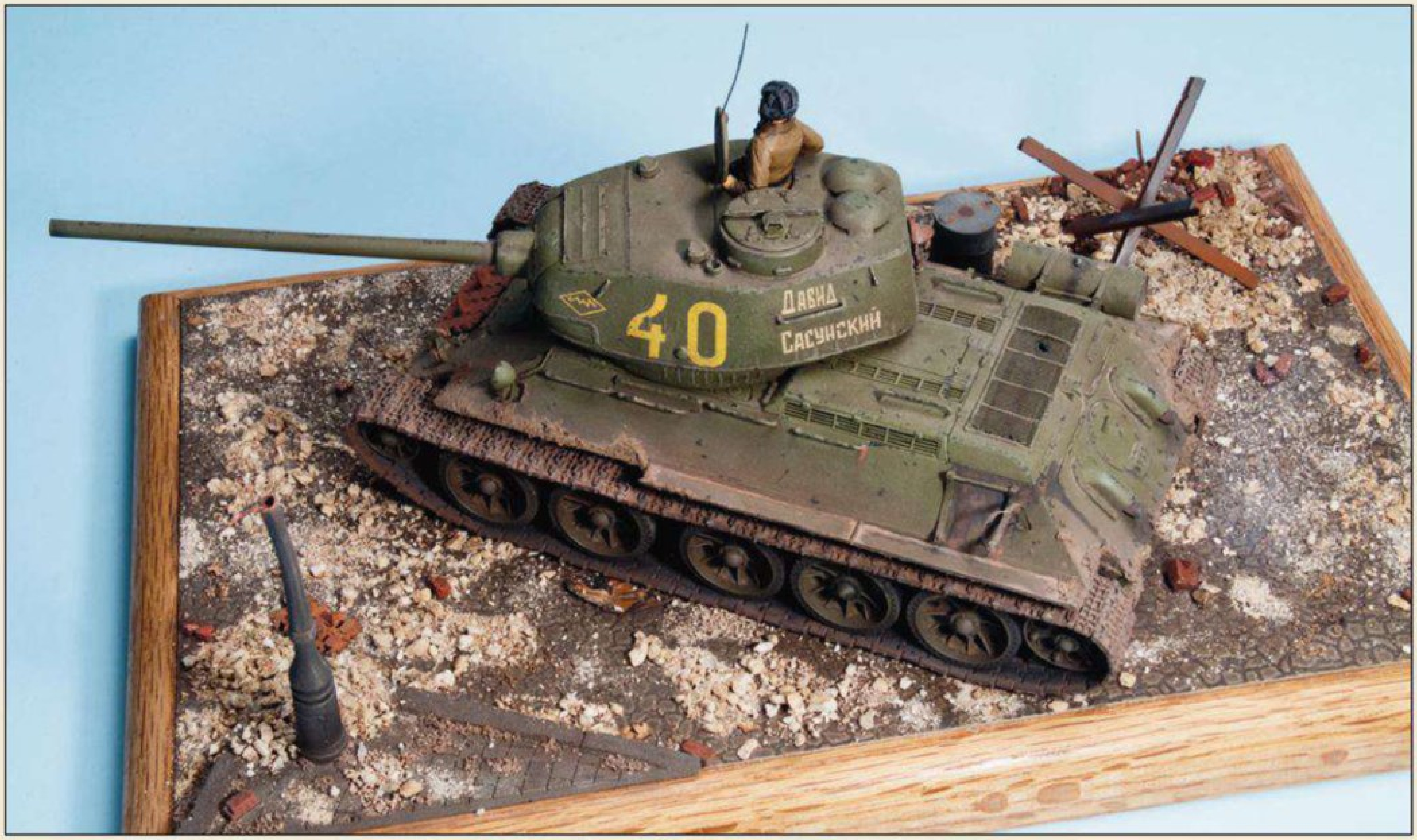
◀ RICK JACKSON
MOORE, OKLAHOMA
During his time on the moon as commander of Apollo 14, Alan Shepard swung a 6-iron at two golf balls, driving the second "miles and miles and miles," as depicted in Rick's build. The figure is a ReHeat 120mm kit that includes Shepard, the jerry-rigged club, and the moon surface with the ball. Rick printed his own decals for the NASA logos, mission patch, flags, and stencils, as well as printing a photo of the lunar landscape as a decal for reflection on the visor. He applied pastels for dust on the legs of the suit.

▲ ERIK ZABEL
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA
To meet a modeling club challenge, Erik built AMT's 1/25 scale Ford Mustang modified dirt-track racer. He wired and plumbed the engine, made a new hood from brass sheet, rebuilt the springs and shocks, and made the front wheels posable. Then he heavily weathered the car; after all, what's a dirt-track racer without dirt?

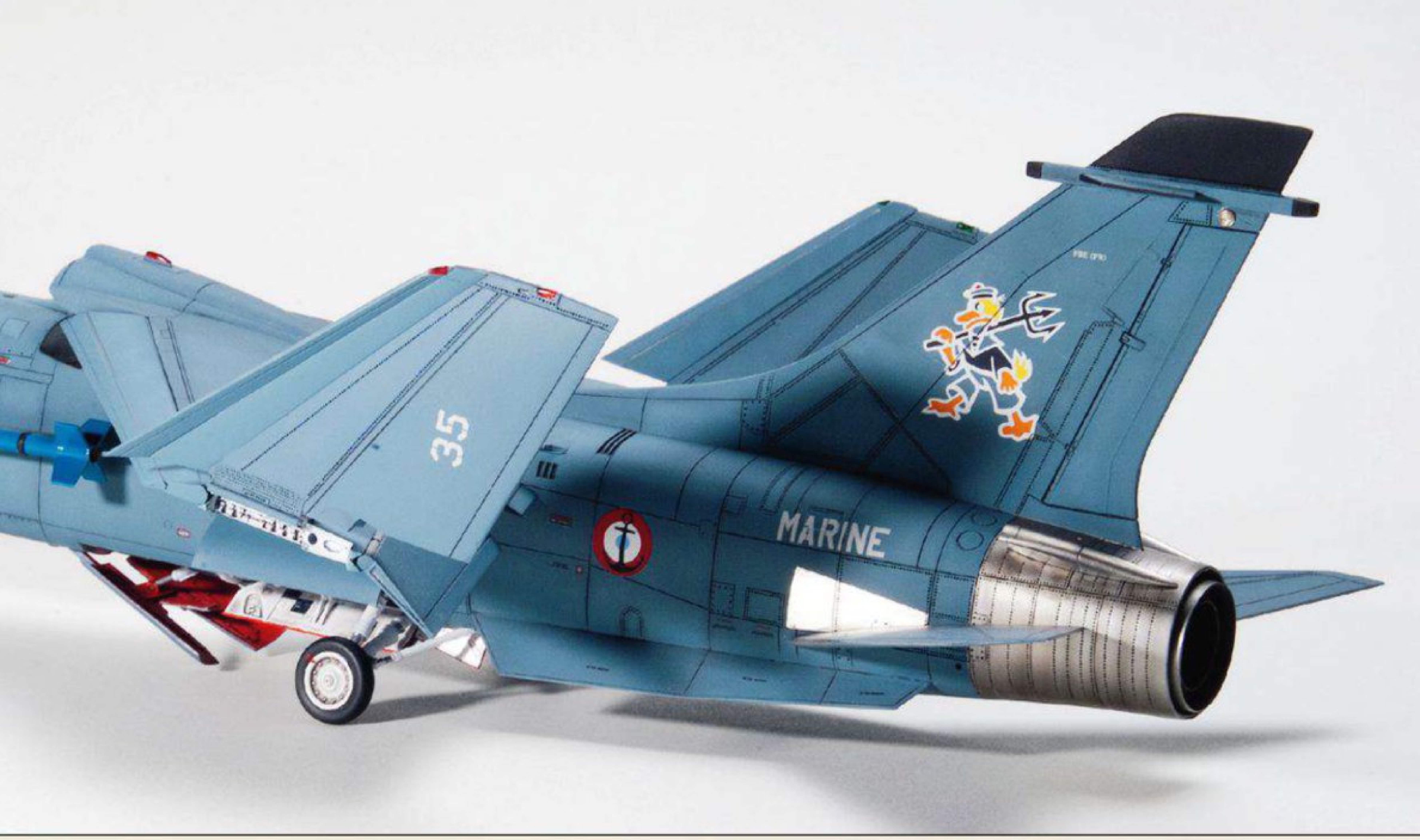
Show Gallery



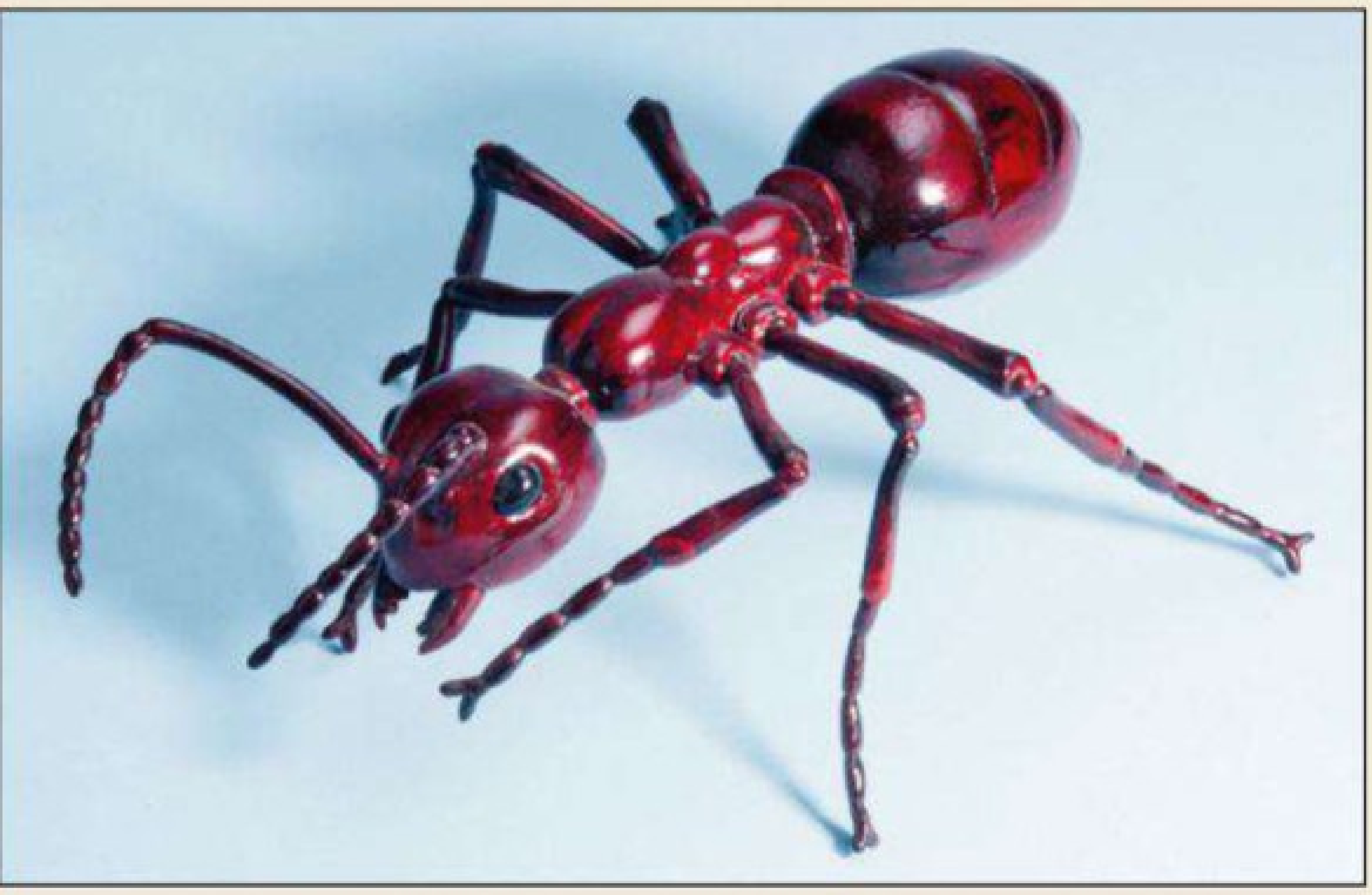
▲ **JIM KAMPMANN**
MAPLEWOOD, MINNESOTA
Jim channeled his love of motor-racing's early days to detail Revell's 1/25 scale Kurtis Midget. He wired the ignition and gauges, added seat belts and associated hardware, and placed a helmet from an AMT 1955 Chevy in the seat. After stripping the chrome from all of the plated parts, Jim airbrushed them with Alclad II chrome. He finished with Tamiya clear red over Tamiya gold. "It was a fun kit to build, although it's very delicate," he says.



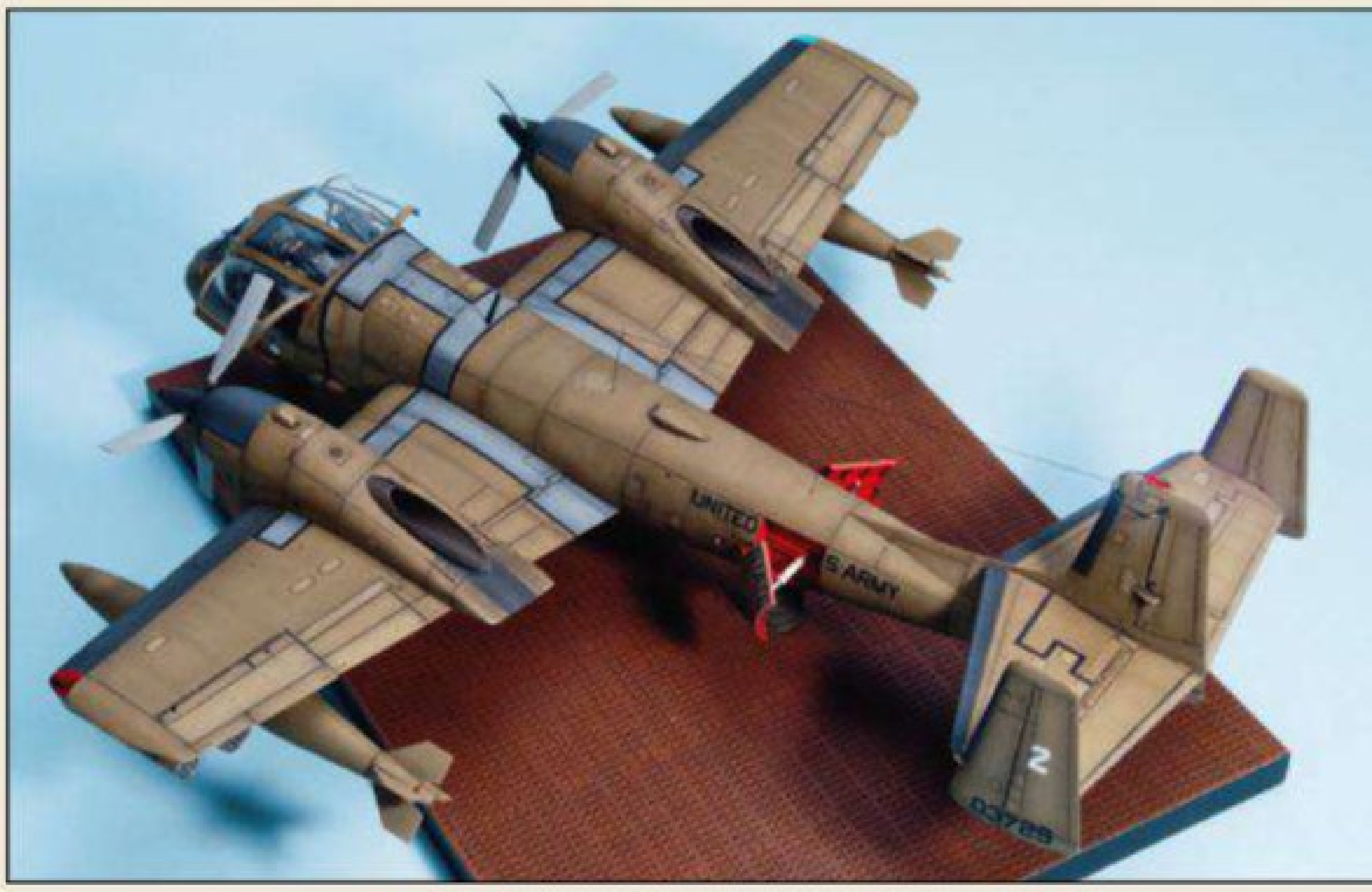
▲ **TRACY SULLIVAN**
BRANSON, MISSOURI
After building Dragon's 1/35 scale T-34/85 with Aber photoetched-metal detail, Tracy decided it needed a base to be displayed properly. He scratchbuilt the sidewalk and festooned the scene with debris, including a resin light post that he broke the top off, then glued in dangling wires.



▲ RICHARD VAN ZANDT
OLIVE BRANCH, MISSISSIPPI
Richard built Hasegawa's 1/48 scale Crusader as an F-8E(FN) from the last carrier deployment of the fighter in 1999. He replaced the cockpit with resin from Wolfpack Designs. Wolfpack also supplied wheel wells, speed-brake bays, exhaust nozzles, and wing folds.



▲ DAN WIDGER
WAHOO, NEBRASKA
One of the great things about the Nationals is that you get to see all kinds of models, including Dan's red ant from Heller. He built the model for a club contest. The theme: bugs. After painting the model with multiple shades of red and washes of black, he coated the model with clear red. And the scale? 5/1.



▲ RON HILKER
FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS
Ron dressed up Roden's 1/48 scale Grumman OV-1A Mohawk with a True Details resin cockpit and a stretched-sprue antenna. He fashioned wingtip position lights from red and green plastic toothbrush handles. **FSM**

Tips for a TINY TANK

Improving RPM's U.S. M1917 • BY BART CUSUMANO

Bart was looking for a change of pace when he took up a 1/72 scale M1917 tank. It was different, alright — and a lot more than he had bargained for, as the little tank turned out to be a mighty big project. Give or take a millimeter or two, the image above shows the model at its actual size.

Whenever I look to my next modeling project, I try to select a subject that is not "just another." Don't get me wrong — I love seeing other modelers' work, and I really appreciate the talent and patience required — but, once in a while, I would just like to see something a bit off the beaten path.

With this in mind, I pulled RPM's 1/72 scale "American 'Six-ton' M1917" World War I tank (kit No. 72210) from my shelf and gave it a look. There was a lot of detail for such a small kit. But it would require some serious work to make it look right.

So, with a set of resin track links from Steelwork (No. ST7204) and a set of photoetched metal from Part (No. P72-105, primarily for the tail skid), I got going.

Preparation

I don't always follow kit instructions to the letter, but I did on this kit due to the complex, unusual running gear and unique shape of the tank. I also planned to use the appropriate photoetched metal from the Part set; it's for a French-built Renault FT-17, and there are some slight differences. On the American-built M1917, the exhaust/muffler is on the left instead of the right. Also, the M1917 had two large hull-mounted hooks in the middle, presumably for unloading from transport ships. There are differences in the running gear, too, so you need good references.

But first, parts cleanup and repair. There was lots of flash on almost all the parts. A few had shortfall and required more work (like the bottoms of the hull sides, parts 8 and 9). Also, the plastic was so brittle I had to fabricate several replacements.

Hull

While repairing the short hull sides, I broke off the two mounting posts (one on each side at the rear) for the running gear units. I tried regluing them, but they just broke again. So out came the brass rod.

To secure the rod in the hull bottom, I glued the sides, bottom front, and rear pieces into the basic hull shape, then glued thick strips of plastic stock inside, **1**. I drilled holes for the brass rod through the reinforced area, then measured, cut, and glued the rod. It must be perpendicular to the hull sides so the running gear sits properly, and not too long so the rod does not exceed the depth of the running-gear units.

Then, I glued the remaining hull part. Later, I realized the rear hull piece (Part No. 13, of course) was upside down. *Doh!* The mounts for the tail skid were now reversed — and the glue was well cured. So, I shaved off the errant details and replaced them with plastic stock strip, rod, and punched details. I made new mounts for the tow hooks; the ones in the kit are better suited to an FT-17. Then I used the kit's hooks, **2**.

There were so many poorly formed rivets on this model that I replaced them with styrene I knocked out using the smallest punch from Waldron's punch-and-die set. Each one is attached with liquid styrene cement. Once they were dry, they received a very careful sanding, then another light brushing with liquid cement. This gave the rivets a domed look like those of the kit, **3**.

Two hatches at the front of the hull received copper-wire handles. I also installed a splash plate, made from flattened styrene rod, on the upper parts of the hatches; this piece is actually two parts, and the part on the left-hand hatch should overlap the right hatch.

I added some latch detail to the engine

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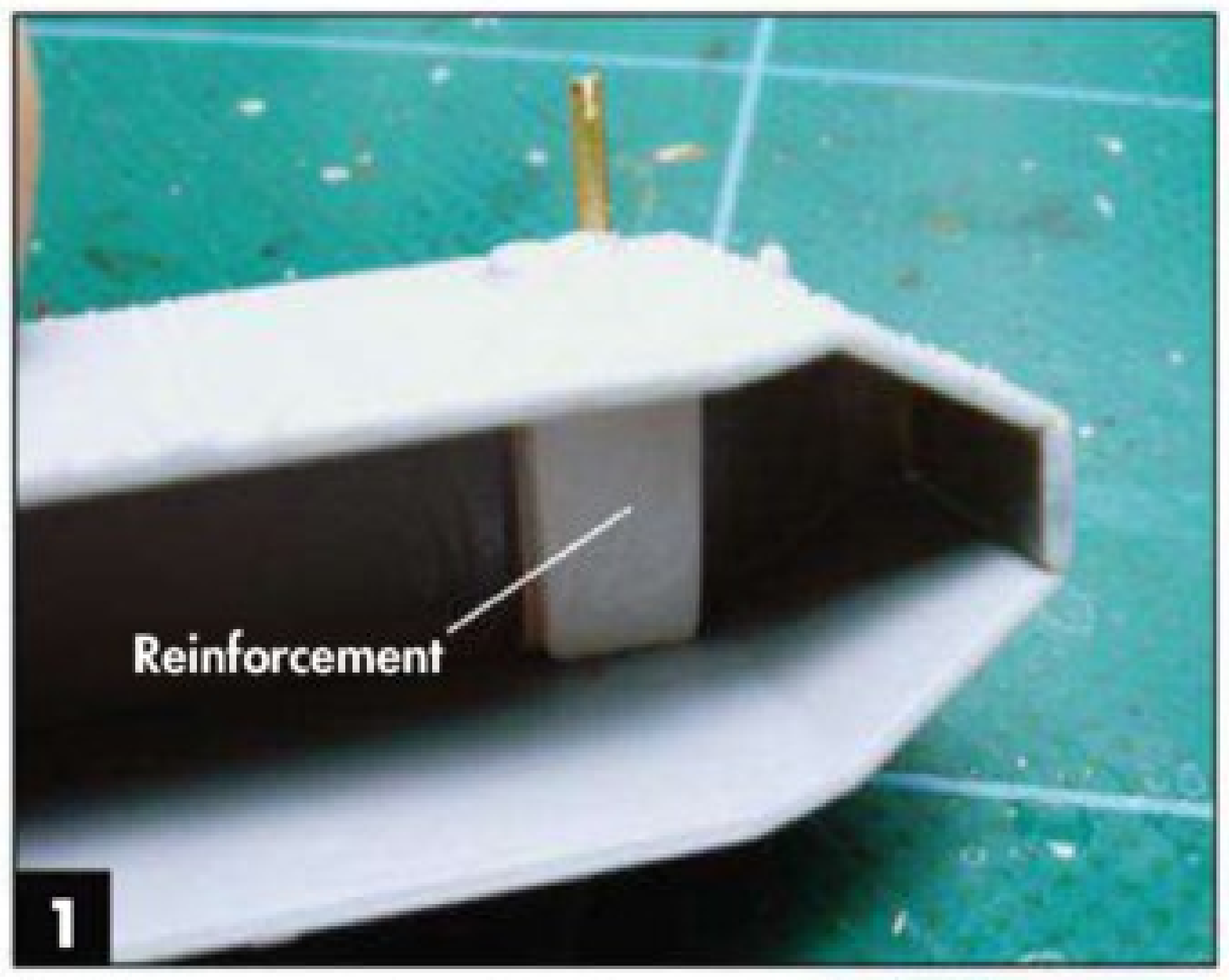
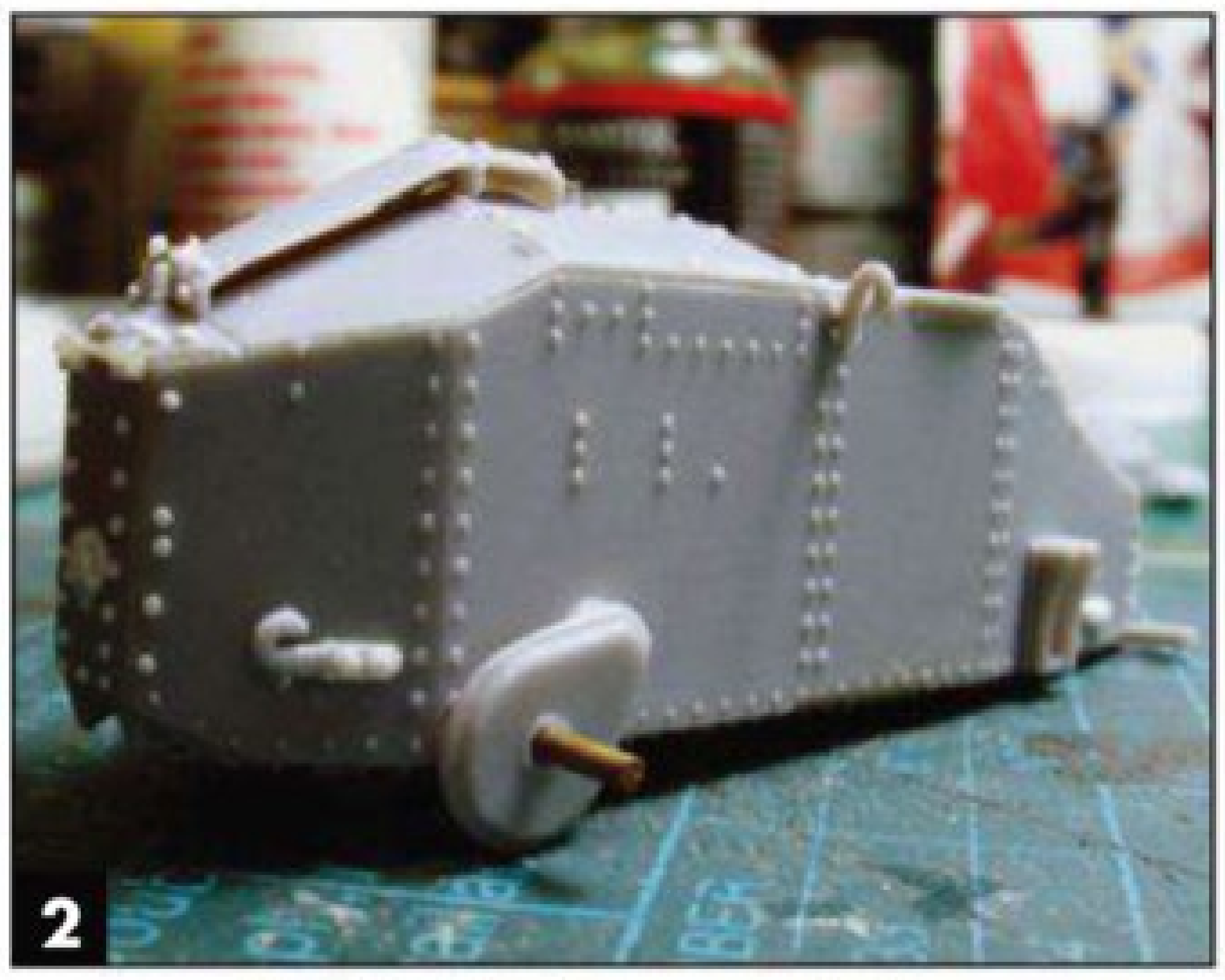
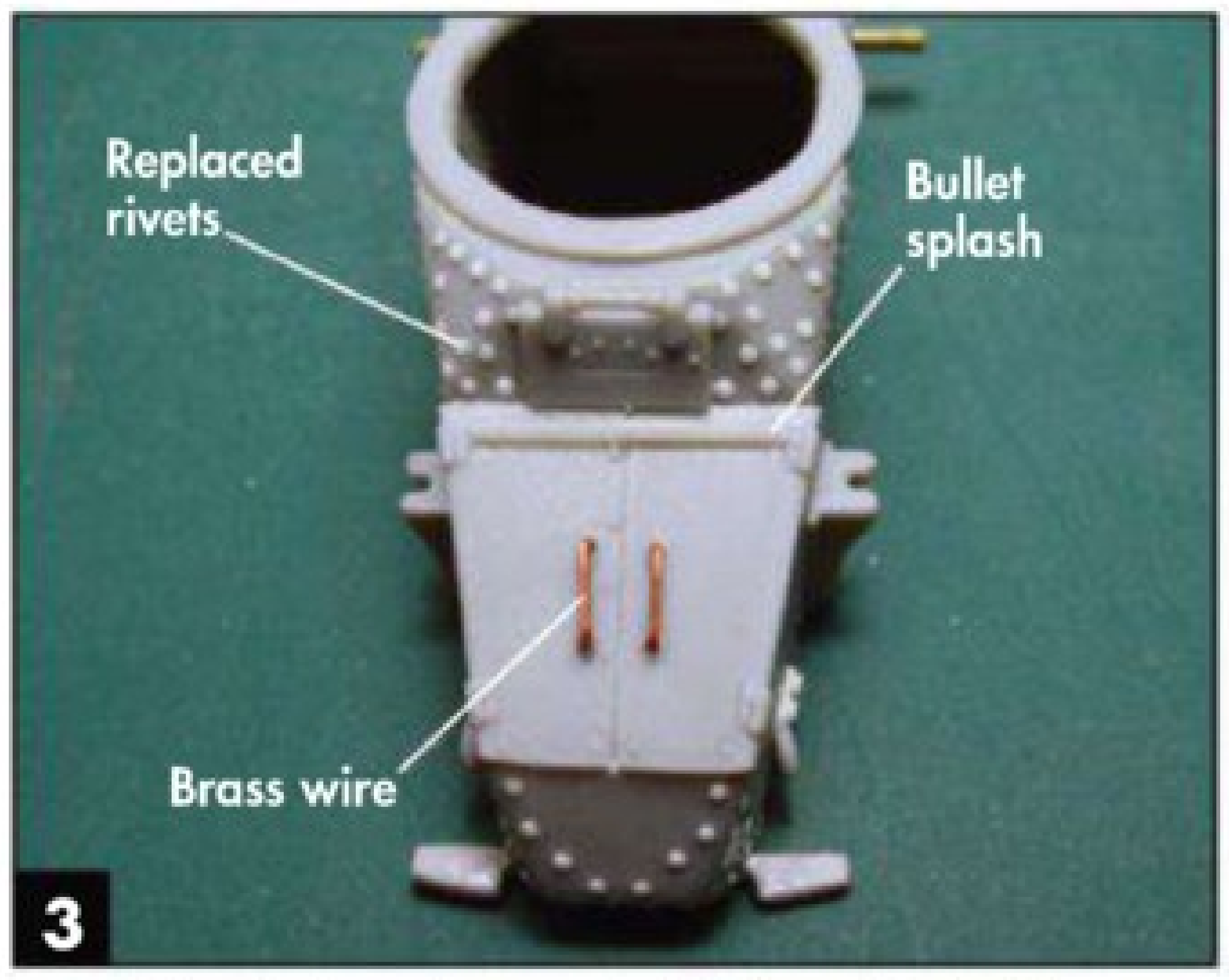


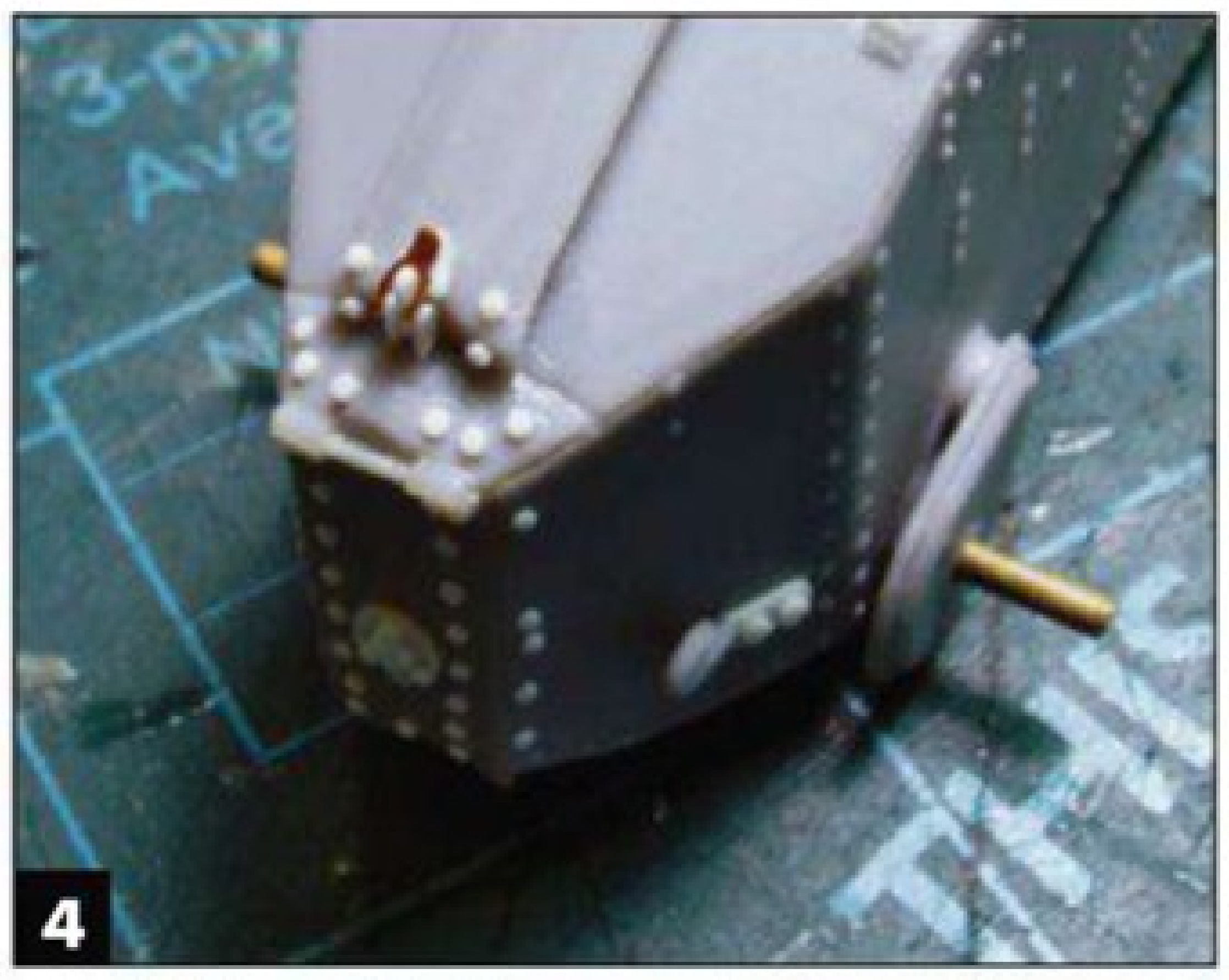
A sheet-styrene lamination provided a firm anchor for Bart's brass-rod axle.



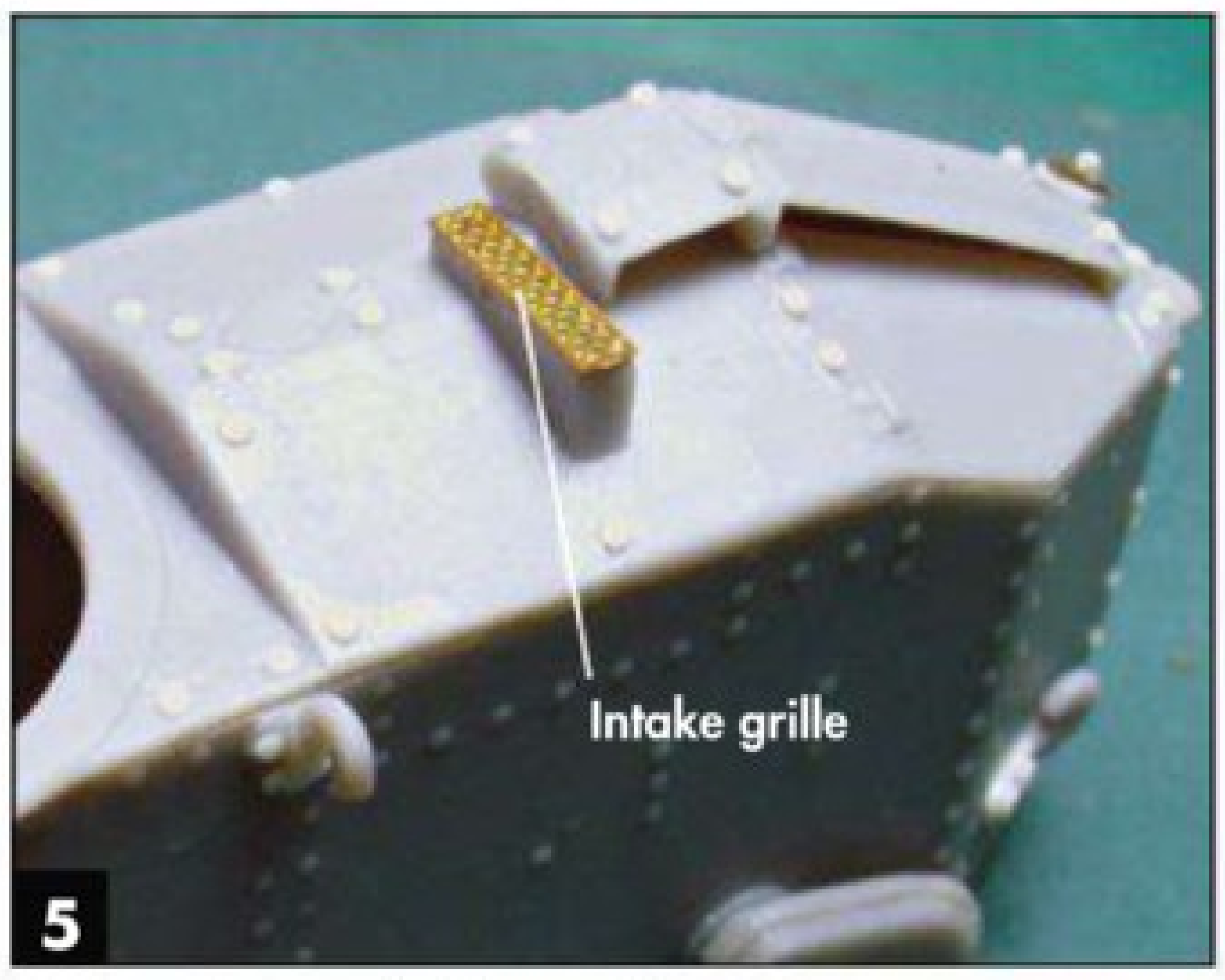
Bart used the kit's hooks but made his own mounts for them.



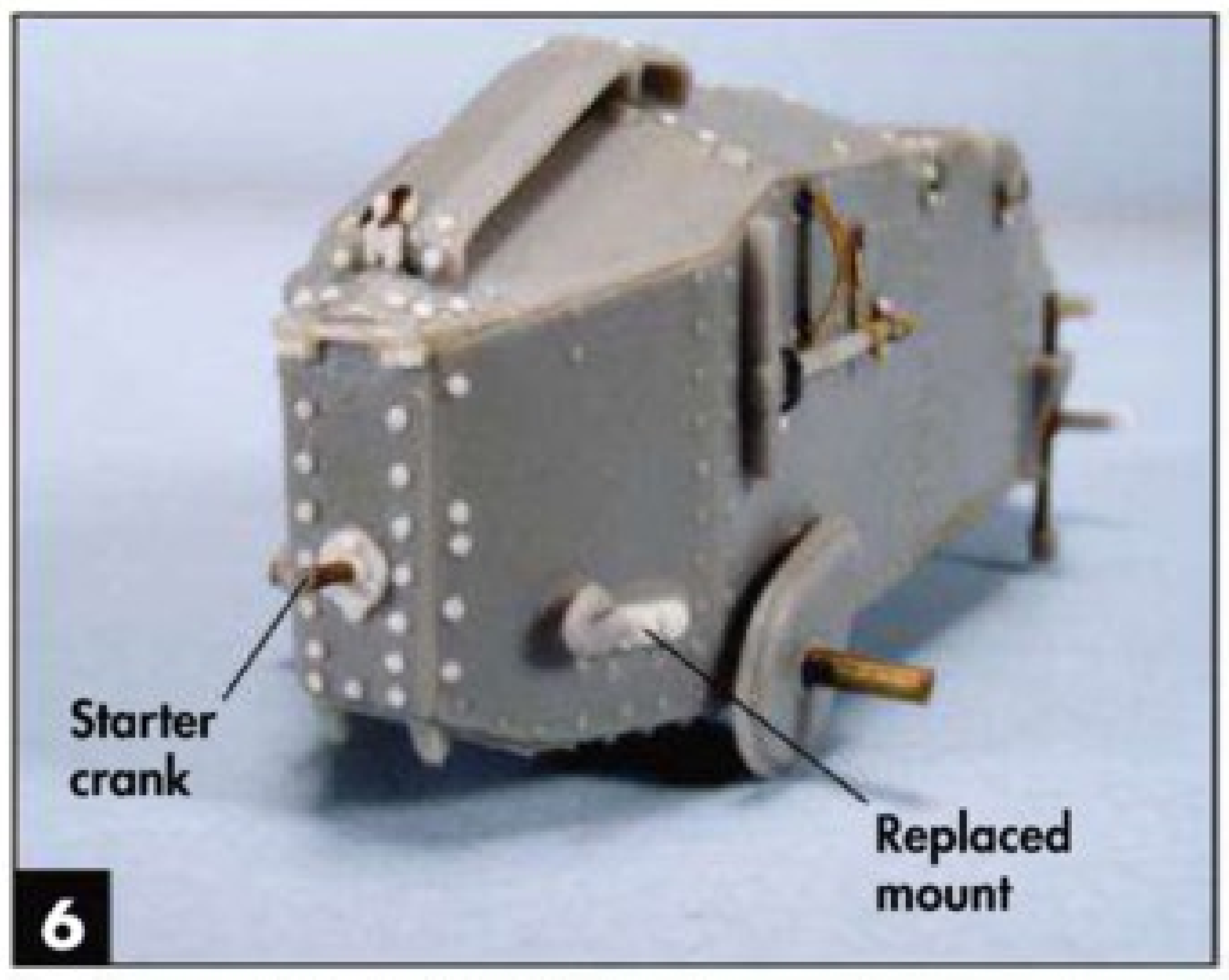
Brass hatch handles and a bullet splash plate are worthy additions upfront. Bart added his own rivets to improve their form.



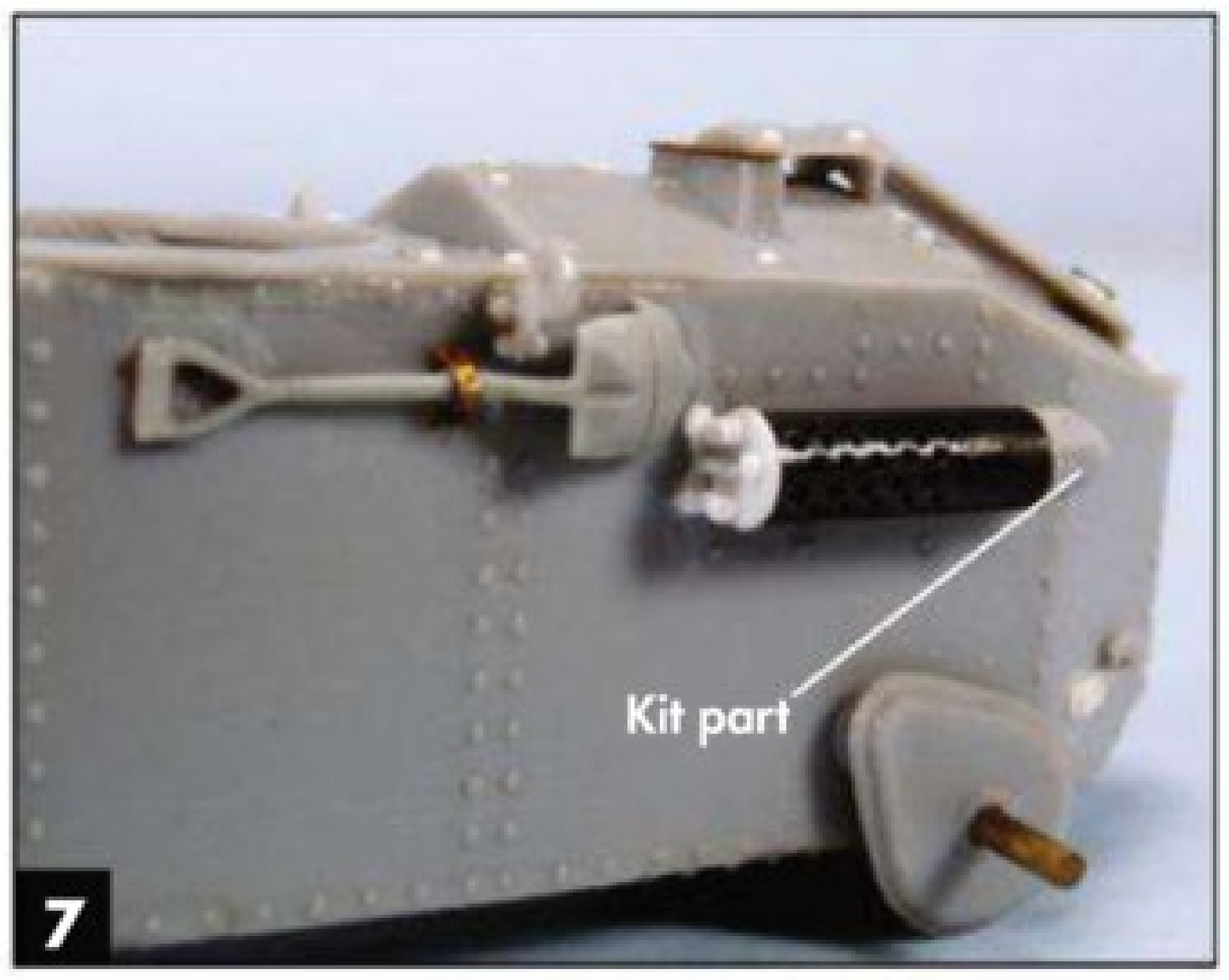
Bits of photoetched brass and styrene dress up a latch aft.



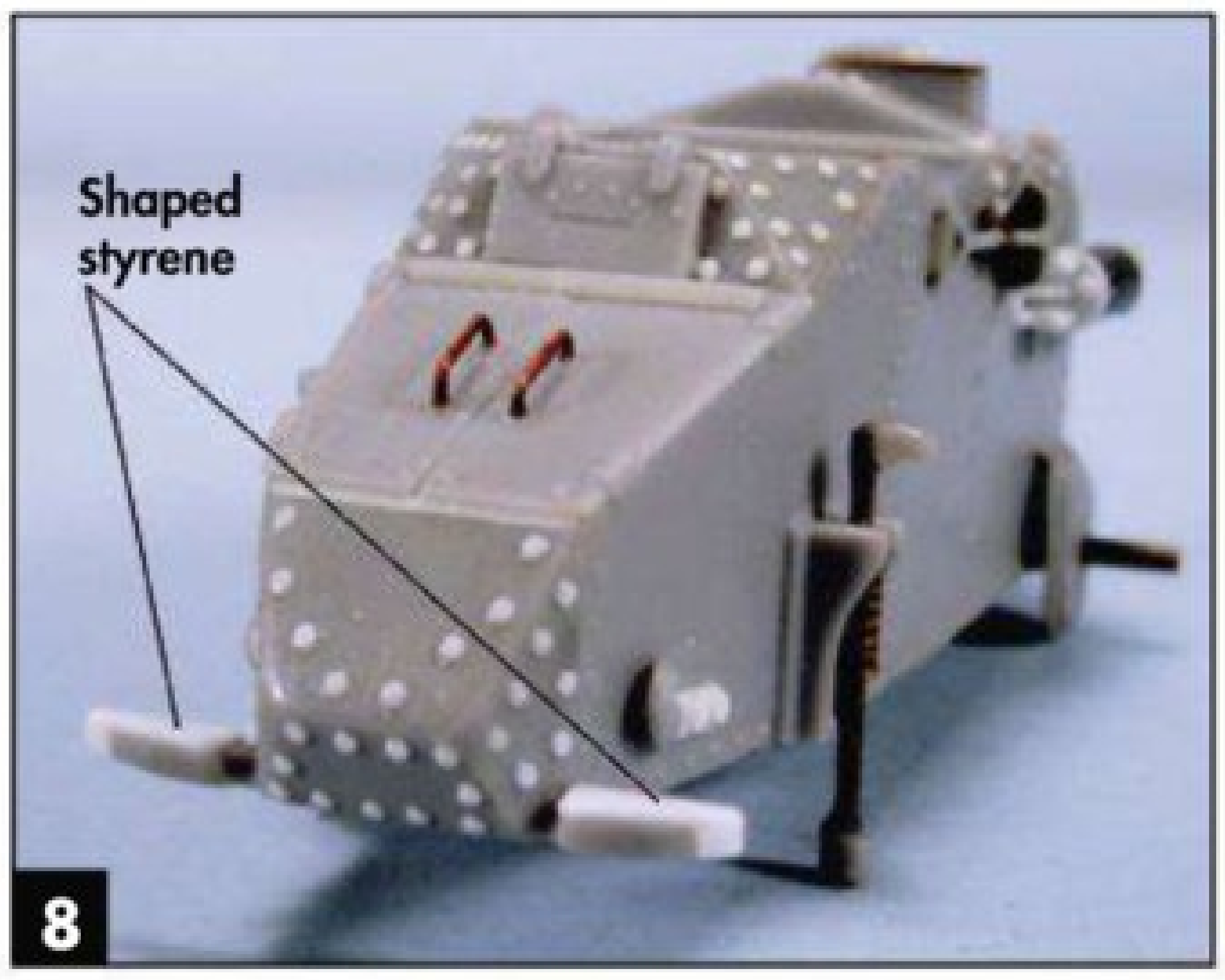
A tiny photoetched-metal intake screen was tricky to detach from the fret and keep flat.



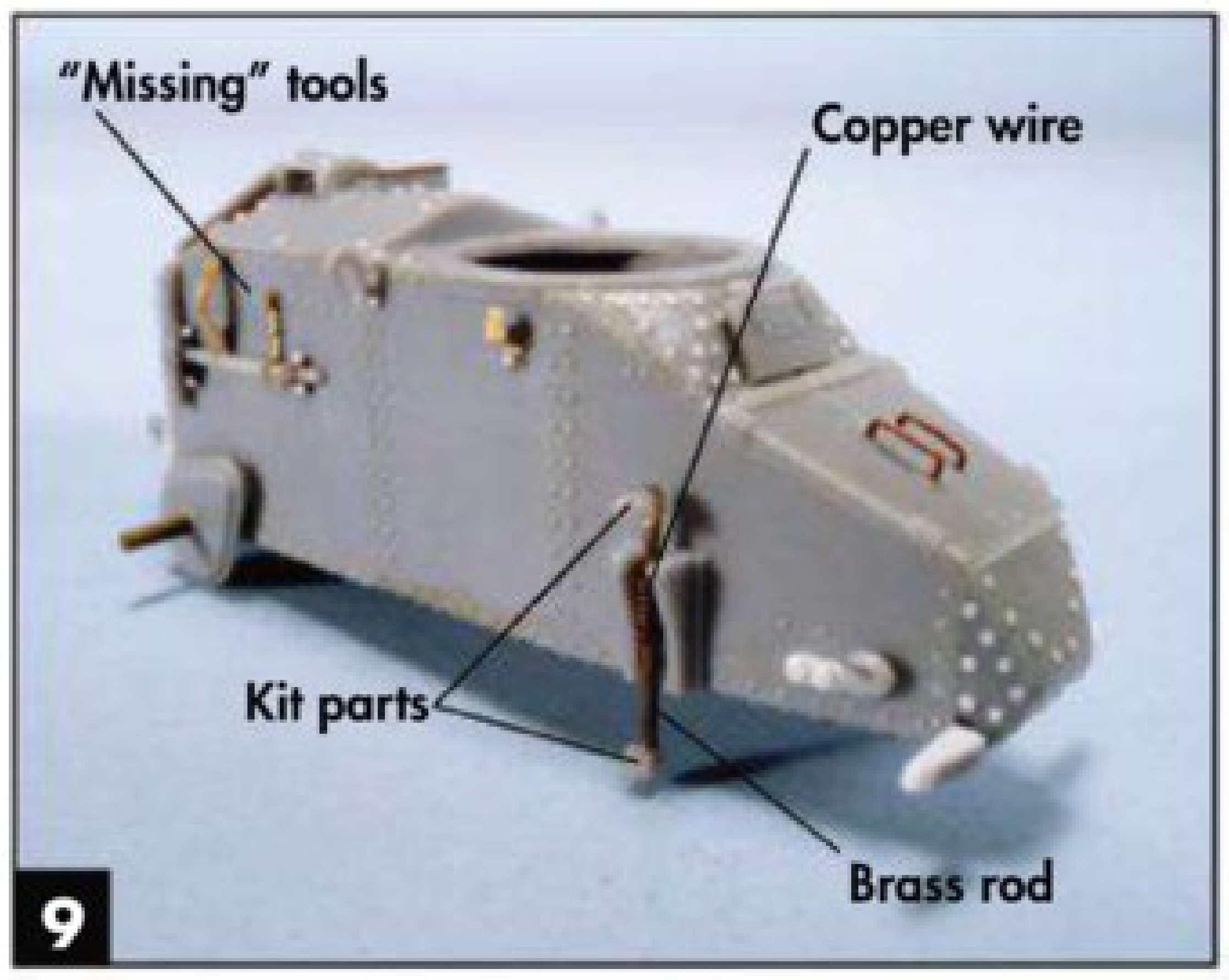
Bart scratchbuilt details for the engine crank at the back of the tank but left the handle off.



A scratchbuilt muffler was a big improvement in Bart's book, although he did use kit pieces for part of it.



Sheet-styrene laminations, carved and sanded to shape, provide running-gear mounts at the nose of the tank.



A scratchbuilt strut incorporates parts of the kit piece as well as brass rod and wire.

cover at the hull rear, **4**, using scraps of styrene and photoetched metal. The Part photoetched metal includes a petite screen for the air intake, **5**.

The rear of the hull is where the crew cranked the engine to start it. None of my references show the crank handle (maybe it was stowed inside), just the shaft, **6**.

Despite the kit instructions, my references never showed the storage box indicated for the right rear of the hull; I left it off. Same for the smoke dischargers, which are optional in the kit.

The kit-supplied muffler was misshapen and the mounts were wrong; I made my own from styrene tubing, punched styrene sheet, and other scraps, **7**. The forward mounting plate alone comprises nine parts. The back end of the kit piece was usable. The center section is styrene tubing I cut to length. Then I measured the holes and marked them onto a piece of masking tape. One row at a time, I held the tape on the tube and marked the perforations with a hobby knife. Then I hand-drilled the perforations and cleaned up with a little sanding and a light brushing of liquid cement.

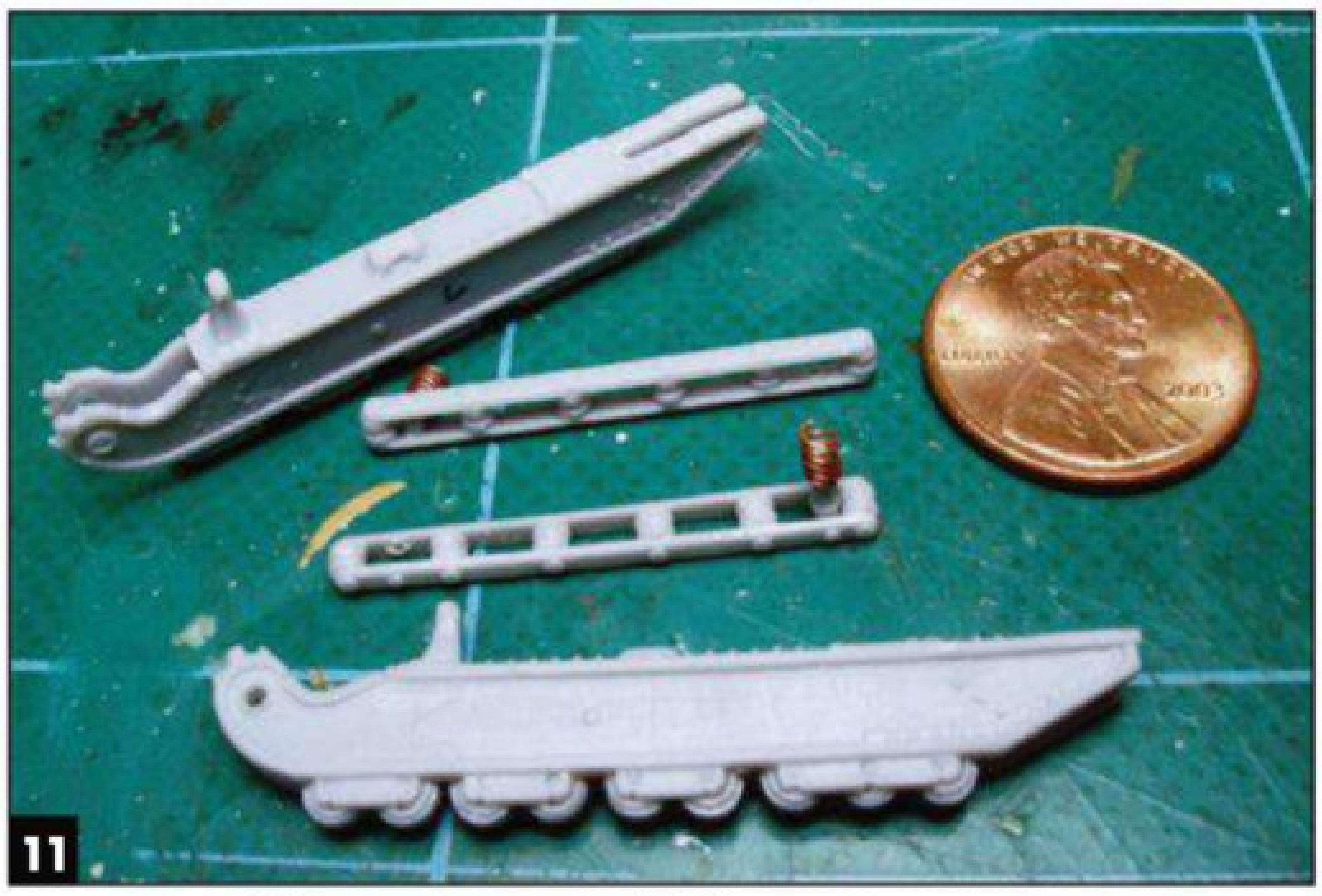
There are two "winglets" on the front bottom of the hull, **8**. The kit parts looked small, so I laminated styrene pieces, then carved and sanded them to shape. These are attachment points for the running gear.

I made tool mounts with Part's stuff and photoetched-metal scraps. I left a couple of brackets and straps empty, **9**, since many of these tanks lost tools to their accompanying infantry.

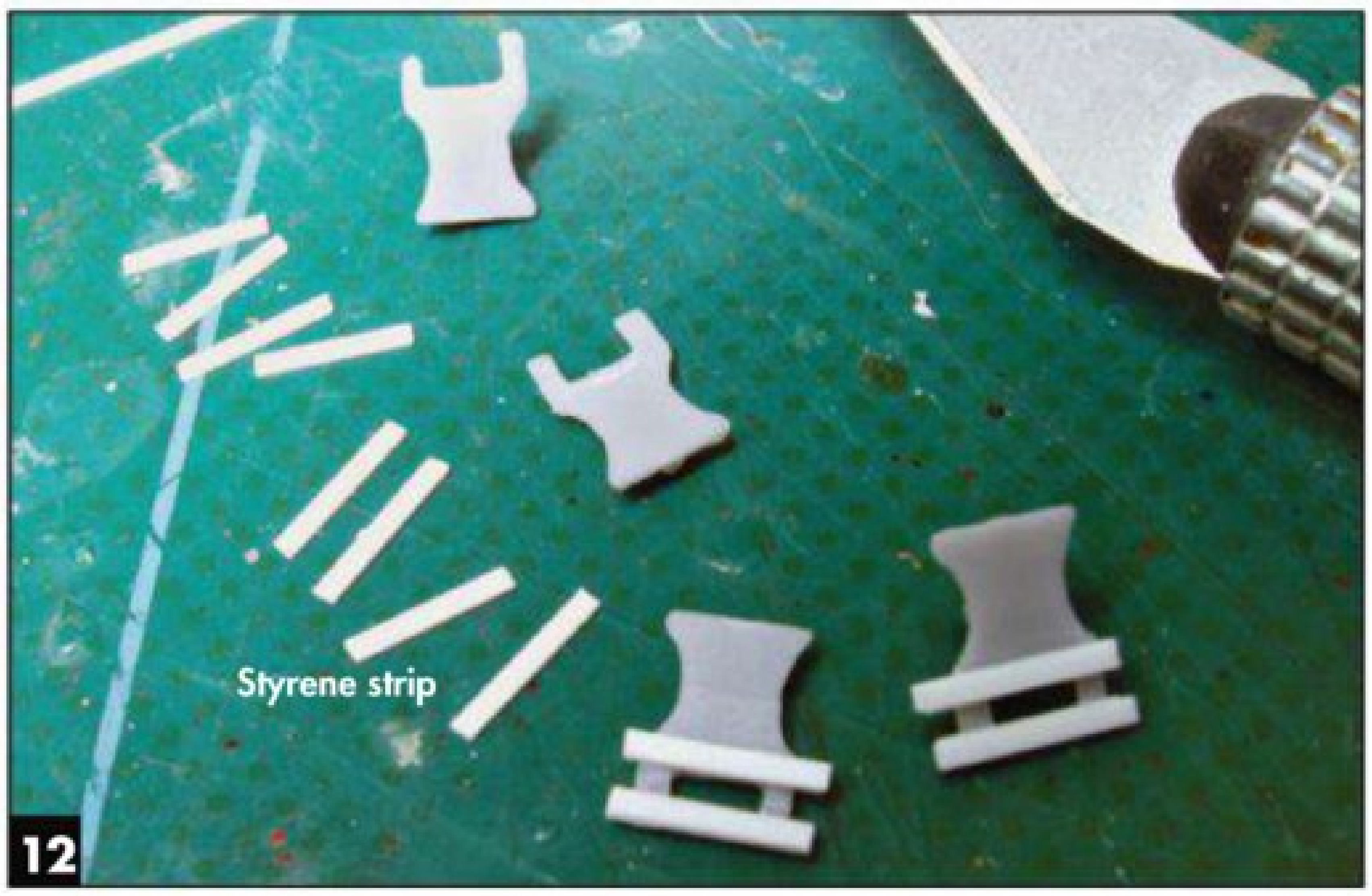
Also needing work were two suspension struts on the forward sides of the hull. The kit parts (No. 20) were simplified and brittle as all get-out. As mounts for the running gear, they needed to be stronger. Out came the brass rod again. I made springs by wrapping copper wire around the rod. For mounts, I cut off the upper and lower portions of the kit parts and attached them to the new brass. I glued the upper piece, then repeatedly bathed it in super glue. I drilled out the bottom part to match the diameter of the brass wire, then slipped it onto the end of the rod and glued it.

10

Those return rollers are looking pretty fuzzy right now — and they don't get any easier to work with.

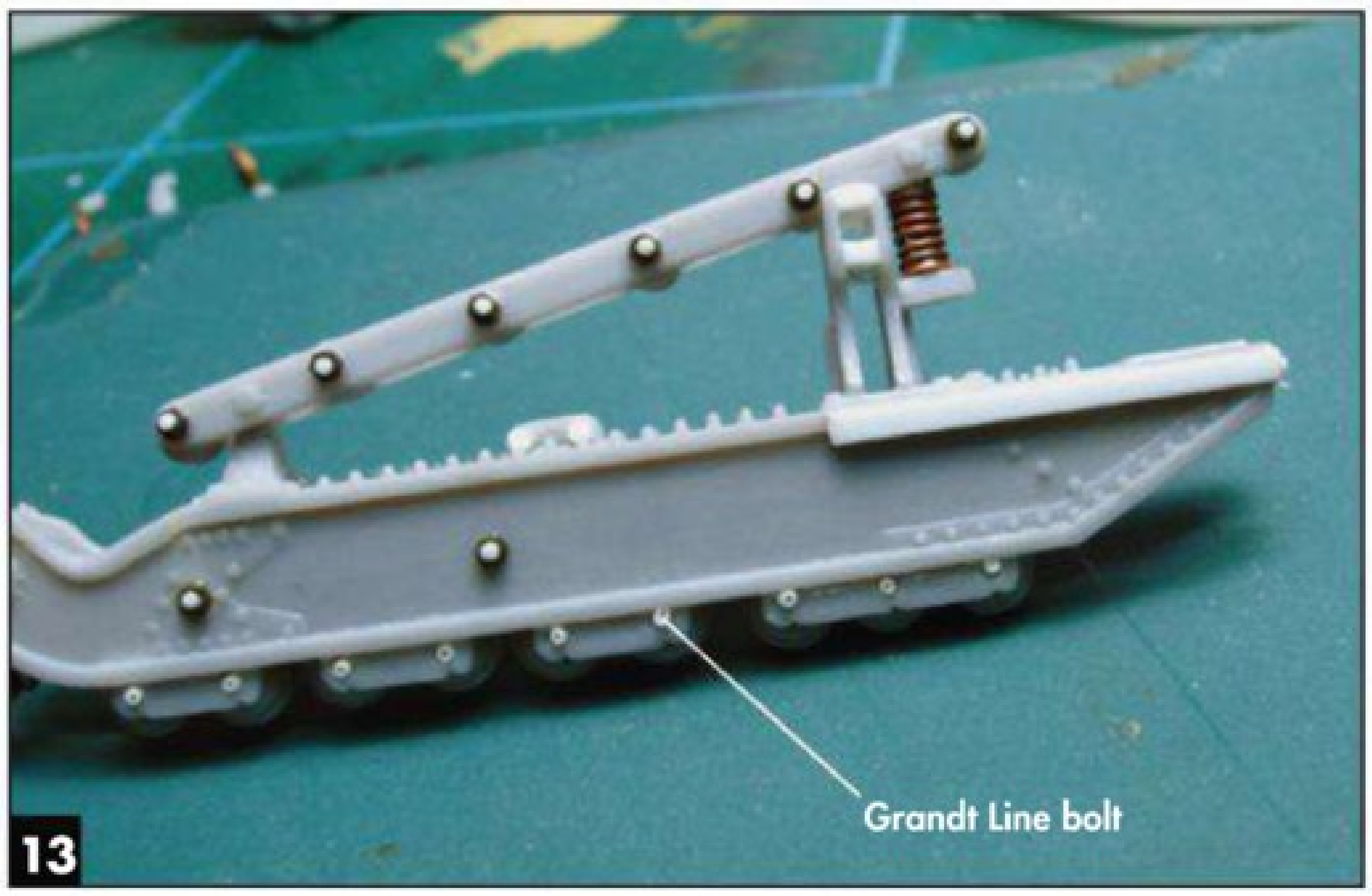

11

Components of the running gear include brass-wire springs.



12

Interior parts of the running gear tend toward microscopic in this scale.



13

The running gear is further festooned with Grandt Line bolts and styrene-strip details.

Running gear

I seriously considered shelving this build after taking a long look at all the parts in this tiny tank's running gear. The return rollers alone account for 24 parts: Each roller comes in halves and, as you can see, they're rough at best, **10**. I should have just thrown them out and made new ones with my punch-and-die. But, no, I took the hard route: I glued them together, then drilled holes in each one. I slid six of the rollers onto a sturdy length of brass wire, stacked them tightly, secured them, then sanded them round with sanding sticks. Doing them together helped make them uniform.

The return-roller assemblies mount at two points. The rear mount is a triangular part that needed no work. The forward-mounting shock absorber for the upper return-roller assembly has a prominent spring that's missing from the kit part (No. 37). Using the kit part as a guide, I made a spring by wrapping copper wire, **11**.

The forward tower mounts for the return-roller assemblies required extensive work, too. I scraped and thinned the inside faces of parts 29 and 30, then laminated styrene strips to make the inside faces look a bit more accurate and provide better mating surfaces, **12**.

Next, I removed the kit part's top and bottom and discarded the cylindrical part that was supposed to represent the spring. The reserved upper and lower mounting sections were then glued to the spring. I added this element to the roller assembly, slipping it in place without glue; the reason the forward mount was not glued was so it would find its correct angle when added to the bottom of the running-gear unit, **13**.

The side bars that hold the rollers in place (parts 35 and 36) were brittle; each broke at least once. I added wheel-mounting bolts from Grandt Line and punched discs on each side to complete the return-roller assemblies, **14**.

After that I thought it would be easy — but the road wheels were another sanding project! There are nine per unit, and each wheel is in halves (total of 36 parts). Again, everything had to be cleaned up and sanded round. Then I sandwiched the road wheels between each half of the lower-unit sides so those parts could be glued, **15**. Talk about fiddly! I added more detail to these assemblies with strip and punched sheet styrene plus Grandt Line bolt heads. I left off parts 42 and 43, which were for the FT-17; on the M1917, this reinforcement strip runs only along the top forward part of the unit and wraps around to the inside. I used strip styrene for this detail.

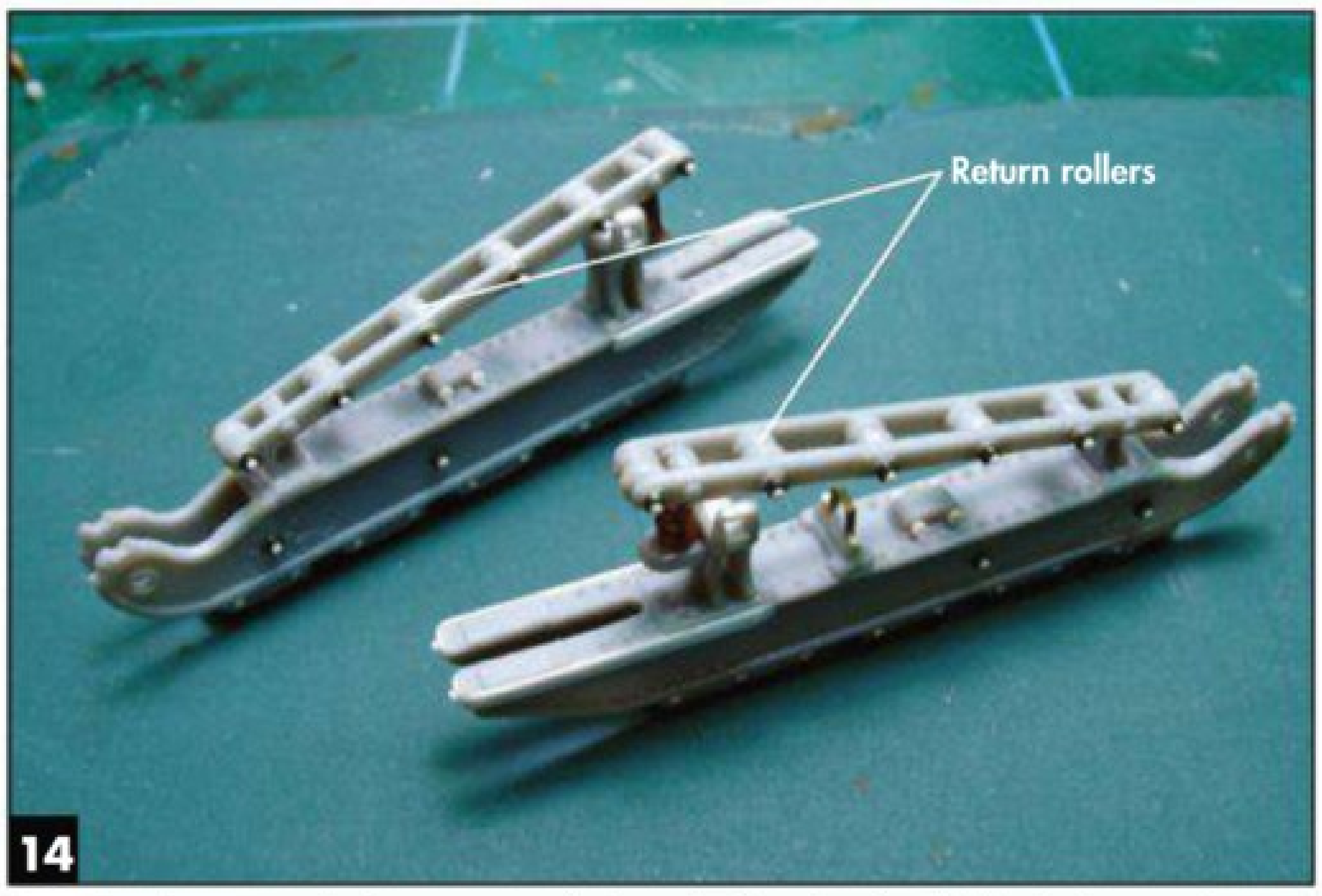
This assembly is topped off with the idler-wheel components. The kit parts were pretty accurate; I added some punched-styrene rivet details and drilled out the ends of parts 34. A little carving was needed to properly locate the idler wheels, but that was easy compared to the rest of the work.

The left unit had a mount for the tank's jack. The kit's jack was poor so I built only the mount, using photoetched metal and styrene stock, **16**.

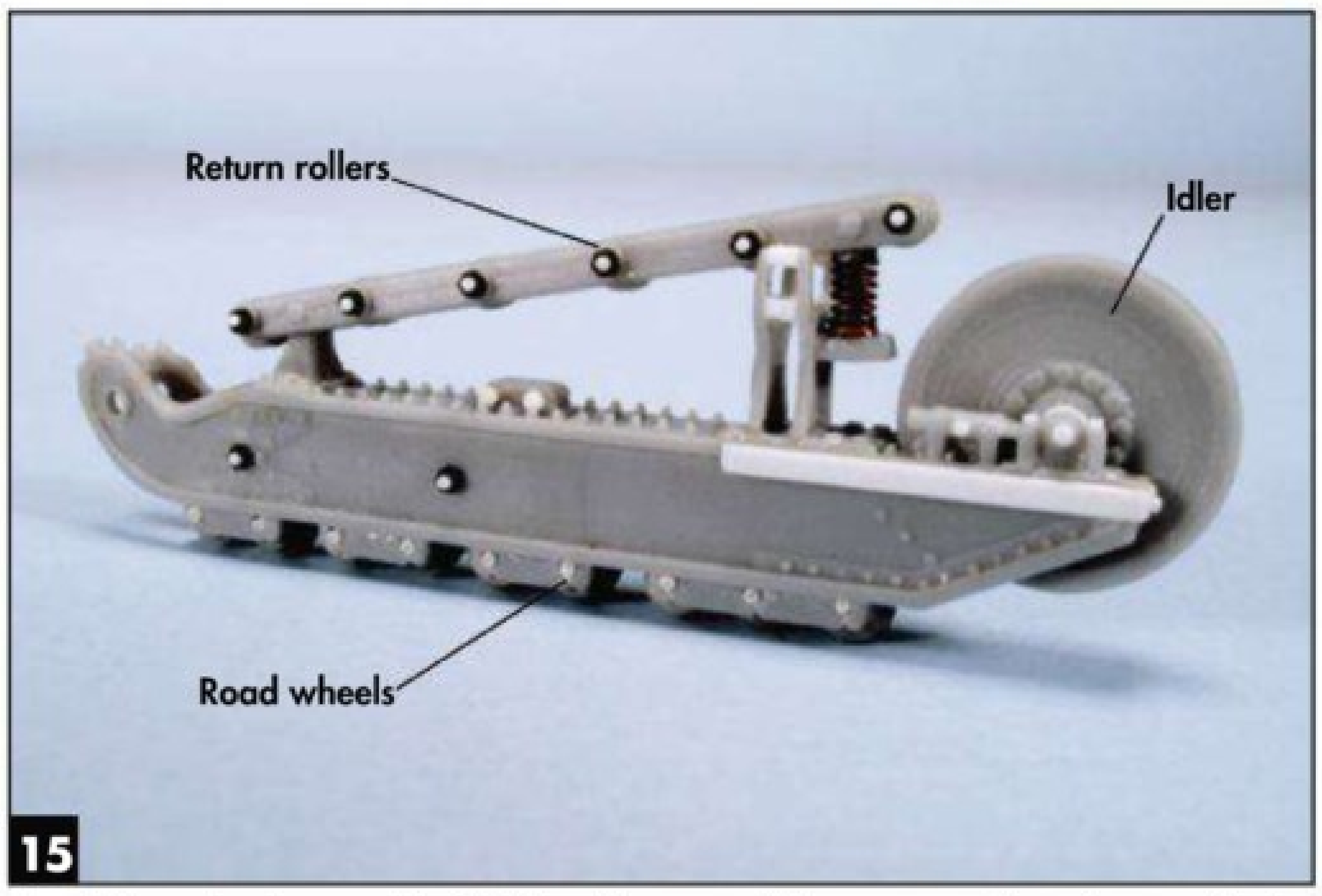
Tail skid

The thickly molded tail skid was the reason I got the Part photoetched-metal set — but that didn't make it any easier. These tiny, delicate parts required careful folding, **17**.

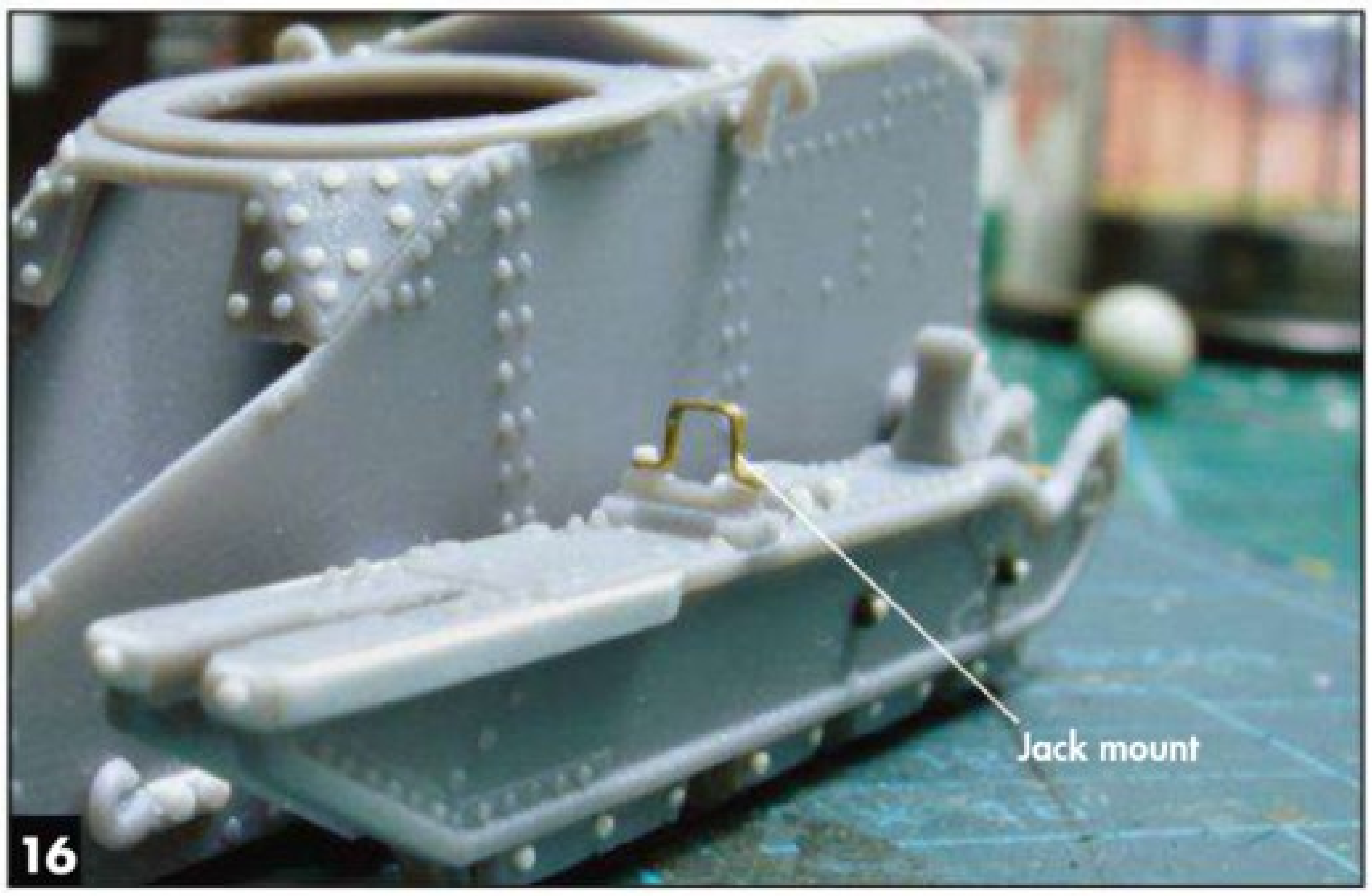
Metal parts are easier to work when you anneal them; I held the metal in a tweezers



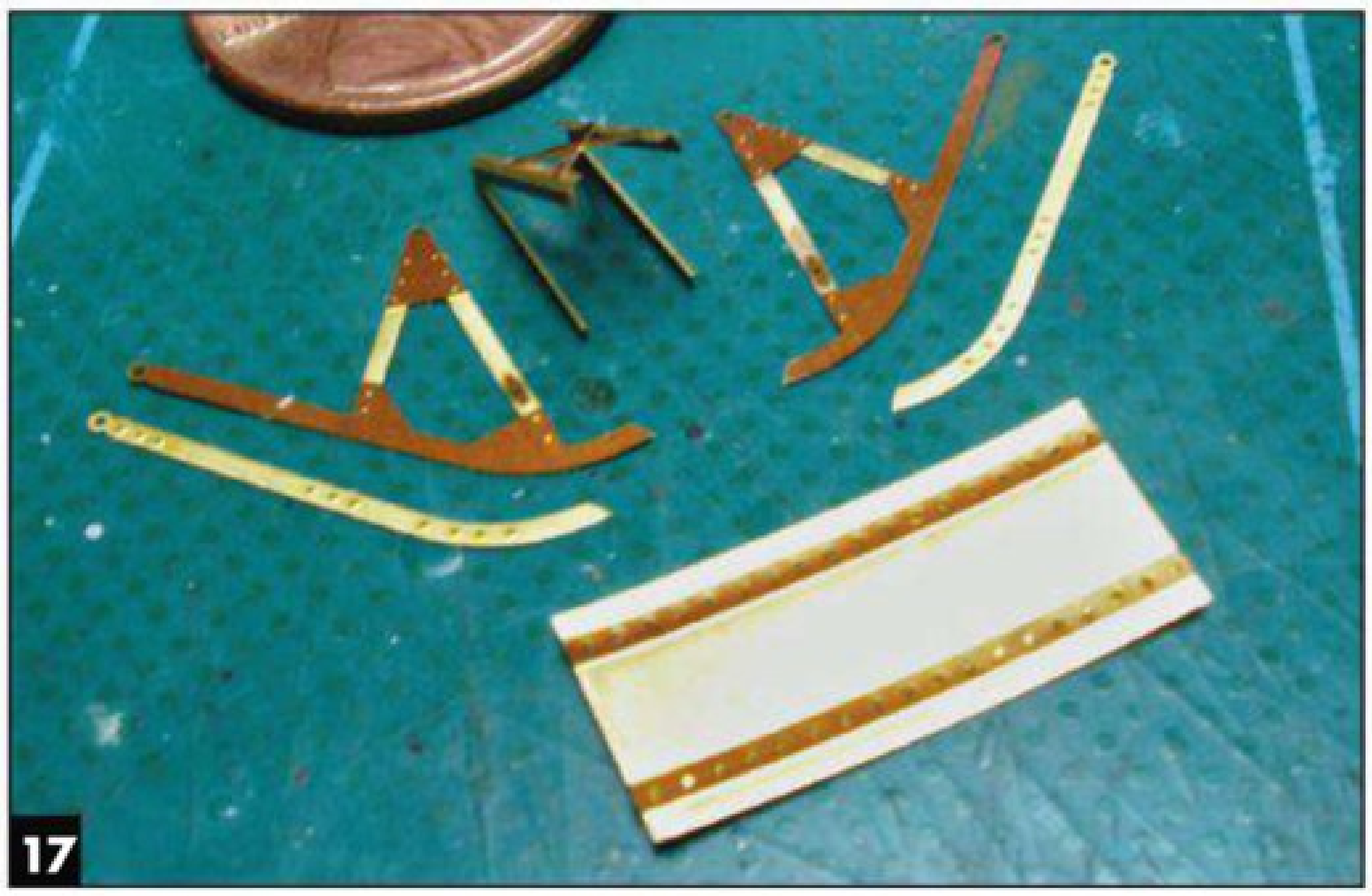
Bart broke several pieces several times before he finally had the running gear together.



The idler wheel assembly finishes the assembly, now ready to be attached and receive tracks.



A scrap of photoetched metal replaces the kit's jack mount.



The photoetched metal improved the kit's tail skid, but all the bending and forming didn't make it any easier.

and passed it through a candle flame just to the point where the metal's color turned. (Remember, the tweezers also get very hot.) If you scorch a part, you can remove the carbon with a Scotch-Brite pad. Special bending/folding tools make photoetched metal easier to form, too.

I used the kit's skid to curve the metal part, **18**, rolling the handle of a hobby knife over the metal plate and working it until it was right. I test-fitted it with the skid's framework, tacked the parts together with Pledge Future floor polish, then super glued them for strength. I left the skid off until later to make painting easier.

Turret

Compared to some of the kit's components, the turret was a breeze! It comprises eight parts, and if you clean them carefully you won't even need filler. The instructions call for handles on the rear hatches, but none of my references showed these; I left them off. (I still wonder how they got those hatches open …) The same references showed no vision slots in the rear hatches; I filled them with two-part epoxy putty, pushing the putty from the back side of the parts until it squished through to the outside face of the hatch. Once the putty had cured a bit, I carefully trimmed the "squish-through" with a hobby knife; later, I sanded it smooth, **19**.

The kit provides you with a choice of two guns; I took the second choice because it matched my references (and because I saw it in action on the television show "Lock 'n' Load"). The kit molding had a little shortfall under the opening of the gun barrel that I built back up with styrene from unused kit parts, **20**. The mounting nub for the gun mantlet was not big enough to hold the part, so I shaved it off and replaced it with two laminated, punched discs, **21**.

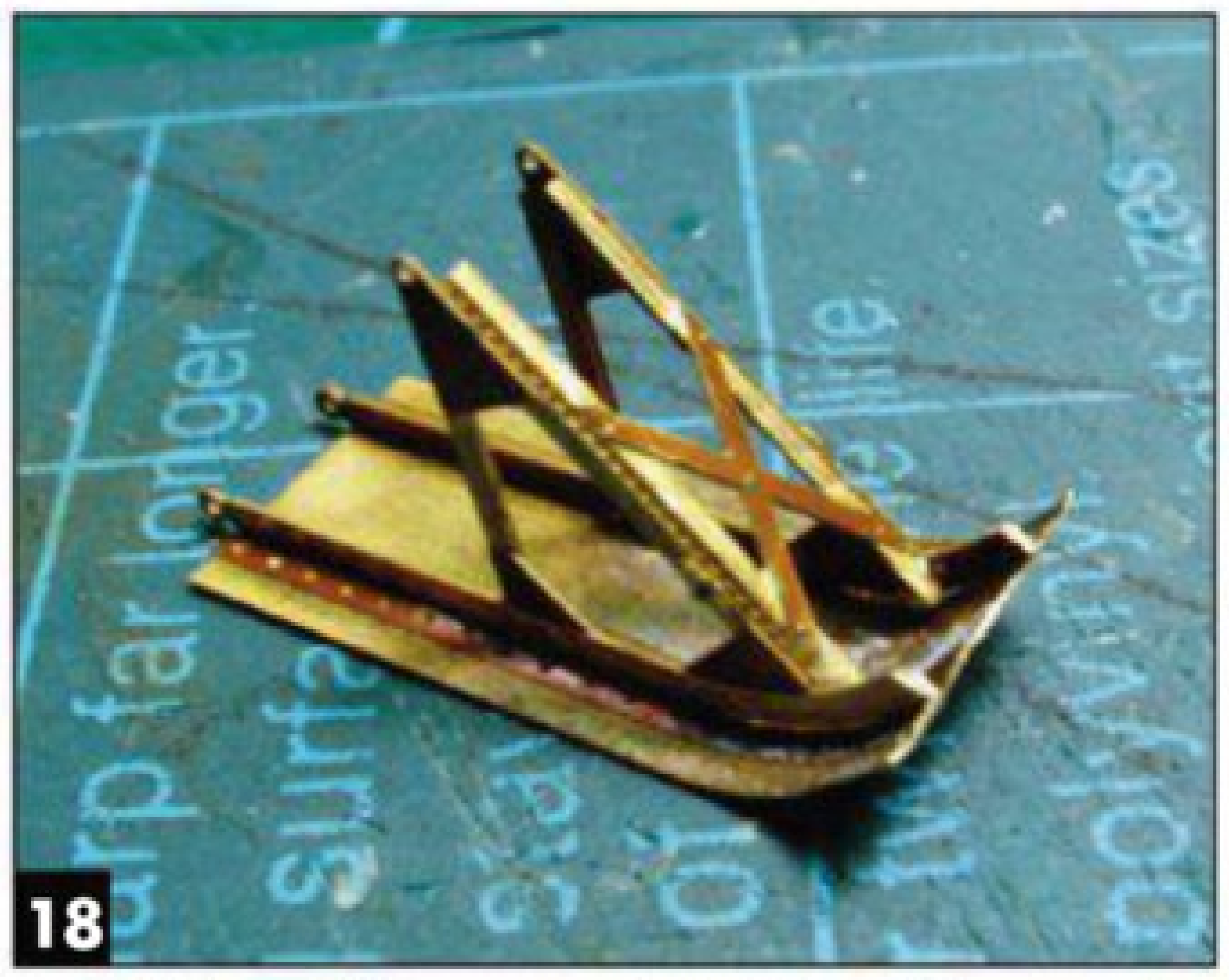
Tracks

The kit supplies "rubber-band" tracks. While I have nothing against them, the resin individual-link replacements from Steelwork are a big improvement. You get 65 links in the bag, and the model takes 32 links per side, so take care — you have only one to spare.

I rigged a building jig using my Hold & Fold photoetched-metal tool, **22**. The folding plate provides a hard and true straightedge. I taped down a steel ruler a link's width away from the edge of the folding plate to provide a straight channel for the links.

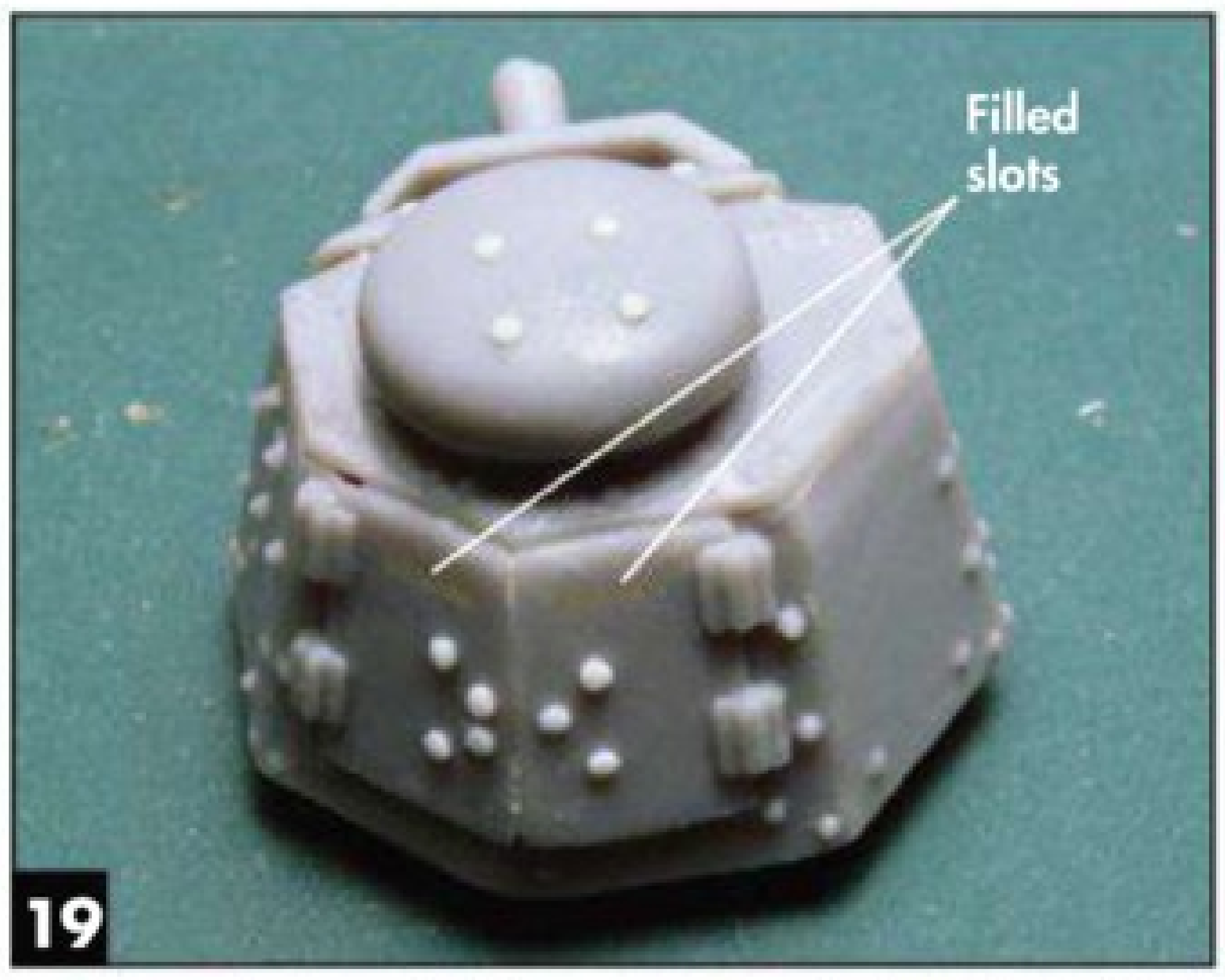
To remove the individual links from their carriers, I scored the detachment point with a hobby knife until it was thin enough for me to snap the part free. Each link required cleanup at the connection points. Also, there are four lightening holes in each link (two per side), but these are mere depressions in the Steelwork parts. So, I drilled to open these holes for a more delicate (and accurate) look.

I started track installation by gluing top and bottom runs together, **23**. Silly Putty held the lengths in place while I added one link at a time around the idler wheel and the drive sprocket (eventually holding the sprocket in position); a brass rod held the drive sprocket until the track links were set, **24**. Silly Putty again provided support for placement and gluing of the individual links. (With super glue, you get only one



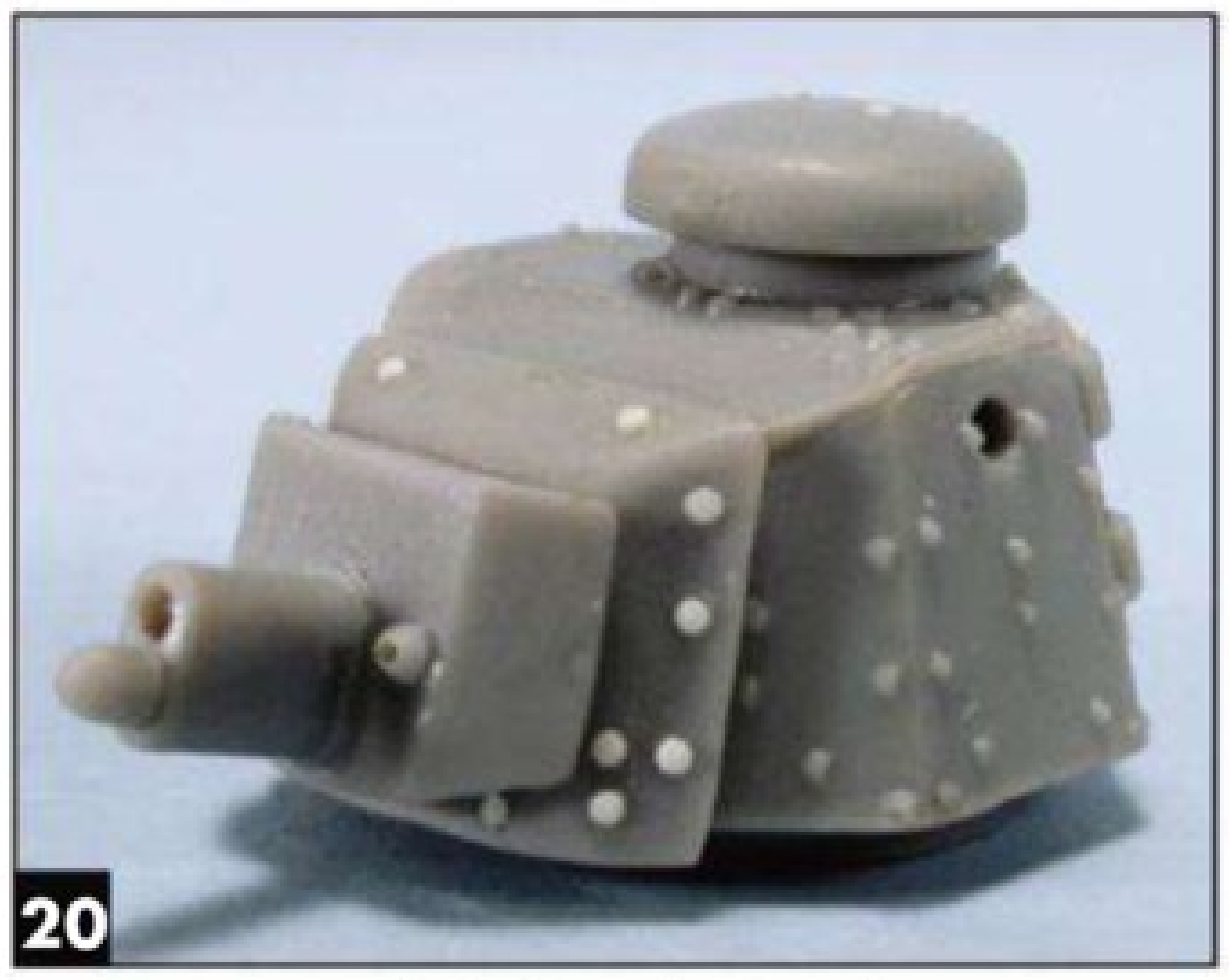
18

Bart followed the curve of the kit's skid to get the rest of it right.



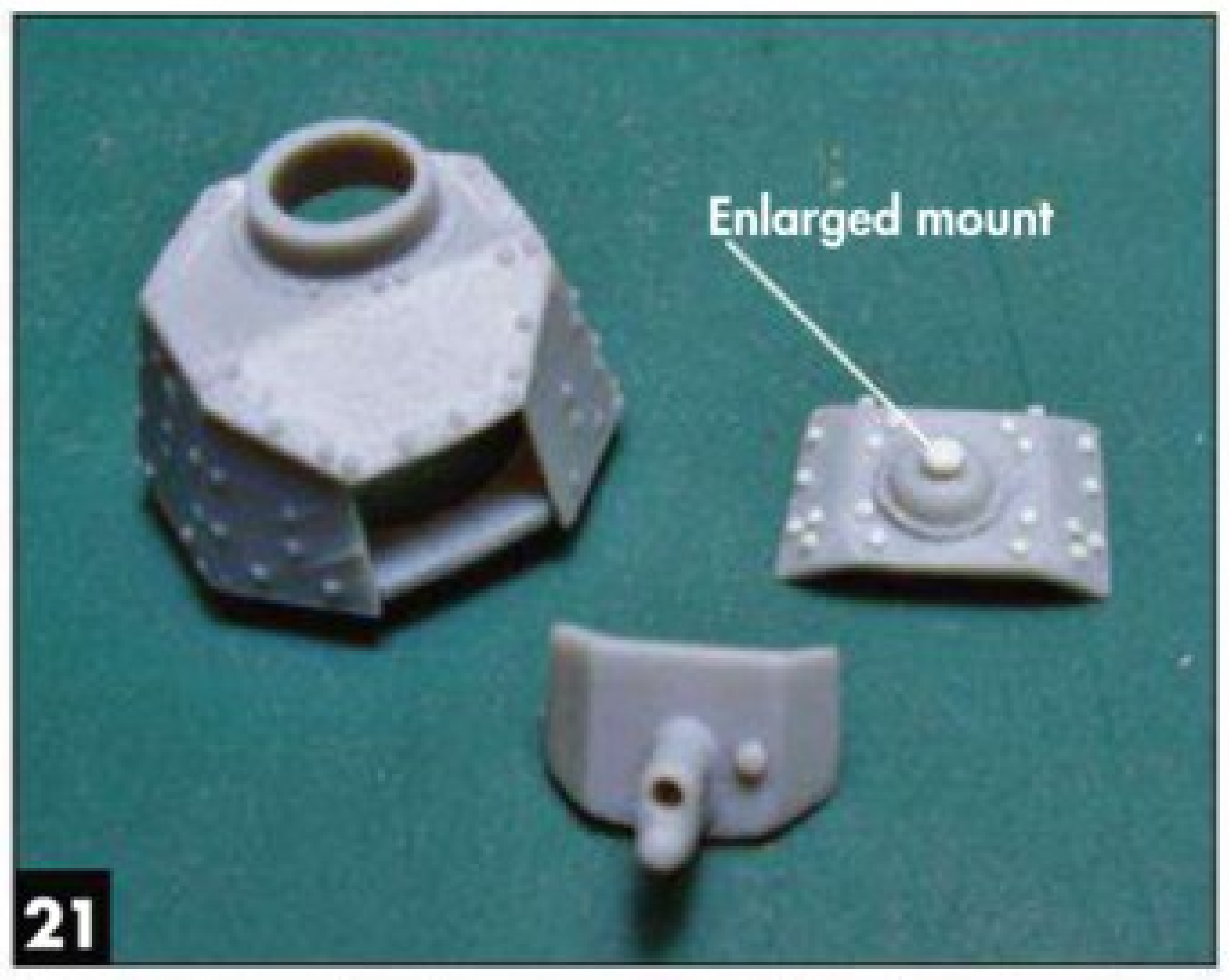
19

Faint marks on the hatches are all that's left of the vision slots Bart found didn't belong on the M1917 variant of the Renault FT-17.



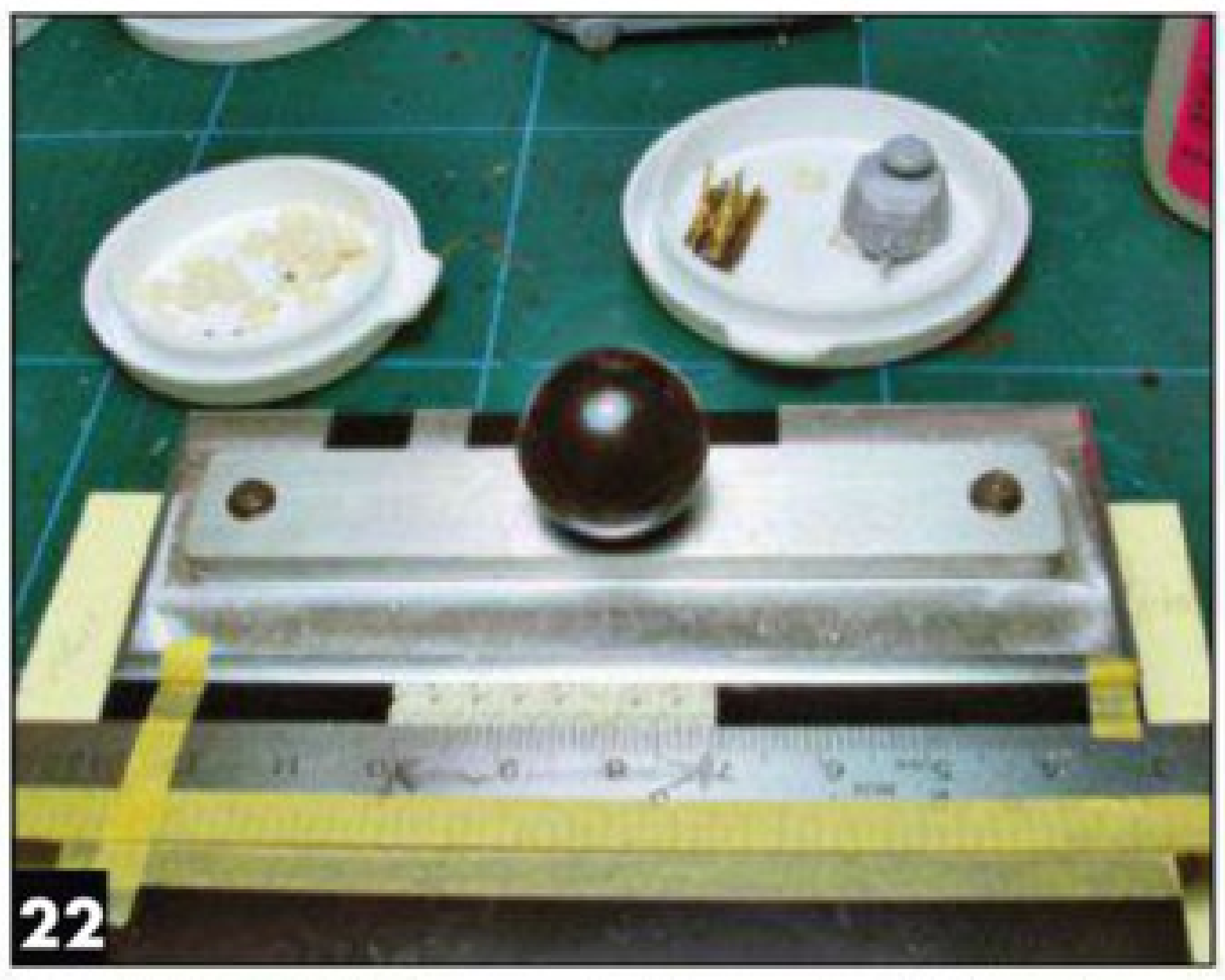
20

Bart augmented missing plastic upfront to mount the gun.



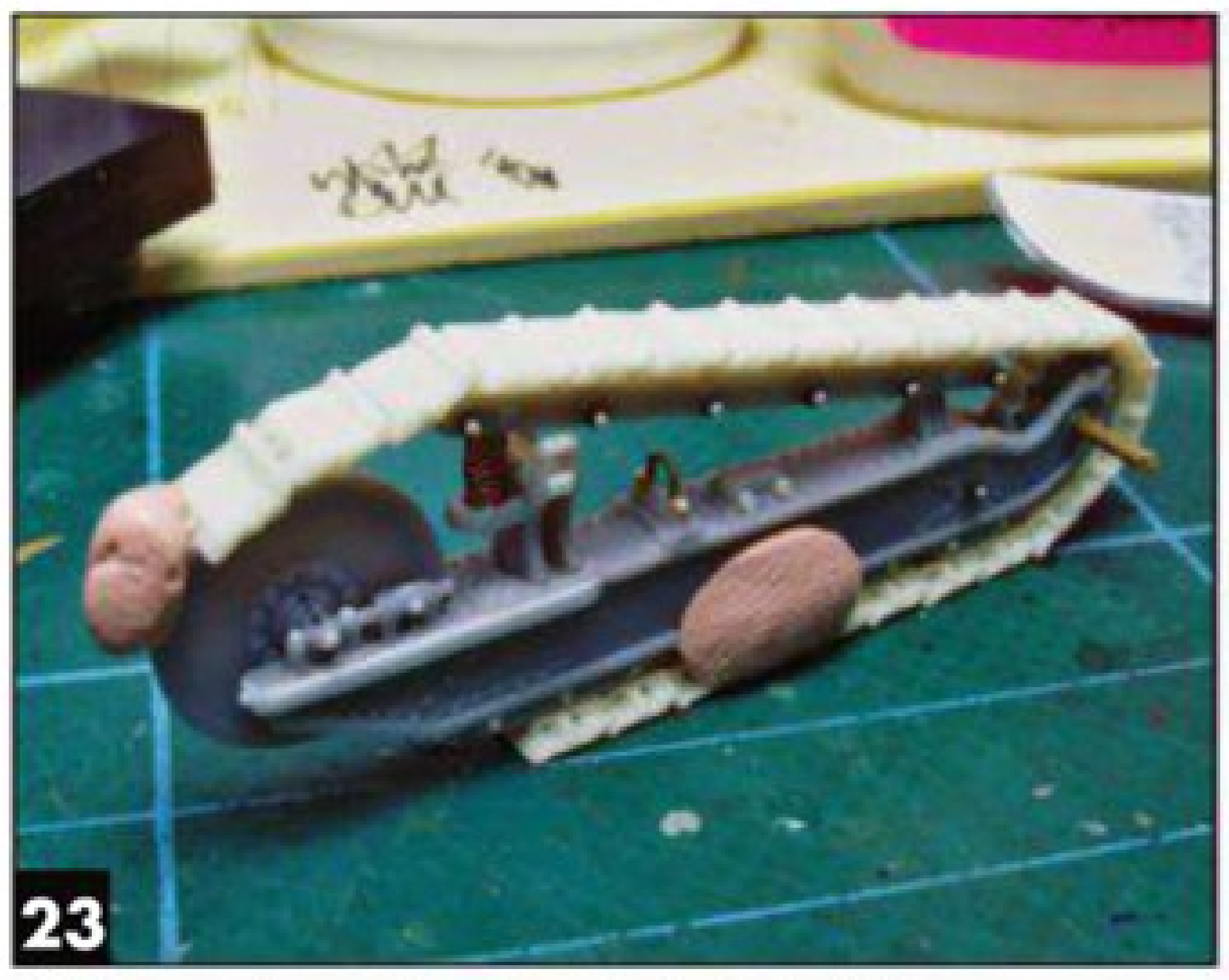
21

Slices of punched styrene provide a better mount for the mantlet.



22

A Hold & Fold photoetched-metal tool doubles as a track-building jig.



23

Silly Putty is seriously a help in holding individual-link tracks during construction.

shot.) In the longer, flat runs, each link should butt up against the next. But when the links run around the ends, they spread a little to reveal two small openings, **25**. I don't believe that the tracks will fit properly otherwise.

Painting

I primed and painted the model in five major components: the hull, both running gear units, the turret, and the tail skid. I cleaned these parts with alcohol, then mounted the hull and turret on sticks to hold them for painting, **26**. I was able to hold the running gear with brass wire and gator clips, but I couldn't figure out a handle for the tail skid.

First came my custom-mixed dark brown primer: Model Master flat black and Italian camouflage brown. There are no set proportions in this mix — I just add black to the brown until it looks like milk chocolate — but it's a good pre-shade before airbrushing, lending depth to recessed details and bringing raised details into greater relief.

I settled on a three-tone camouflage scheme of sand, green, and red I've seen on restored M1917s. Humbrol matte brown yellow (No. 94) was the first color over the primer, thinned 50 percent and shot through a Paasche VL double-action airbrush at about 12 psi. I first sprayed the centers of individual panels, then misted overall to create a finish with a hint of the underlying dark brown in recesses.

For the other two colors, I lightly traced the color patterns using a soft lead in a mechanical pencil, first on the hull, then on the running gear and turret, making sure the color areas were continuous from top to bottom, **27**.

Another decision: How to apply the camouflage to this tiny tank. Should I airbrush it or hand-brush it? I didn't know if even my best airbrush could spray that tight a pattern, and masking would be a nightmare. But, with this pattern, I wouldn't need those soft edges only an airbrush can achieve. So I hand-brushed the camo.

Starting with Humbrol hull red (No. 177), I put a little paint on a palette and gradually added thinner with my paintbrush until the paint went on somewhat translucent, starting with the outline and then filling in. A second coat finished the job with nary a brush mark. Once the red had dried overnight, I applied Humbrol matte uniform green (No. 76) in the same manner.

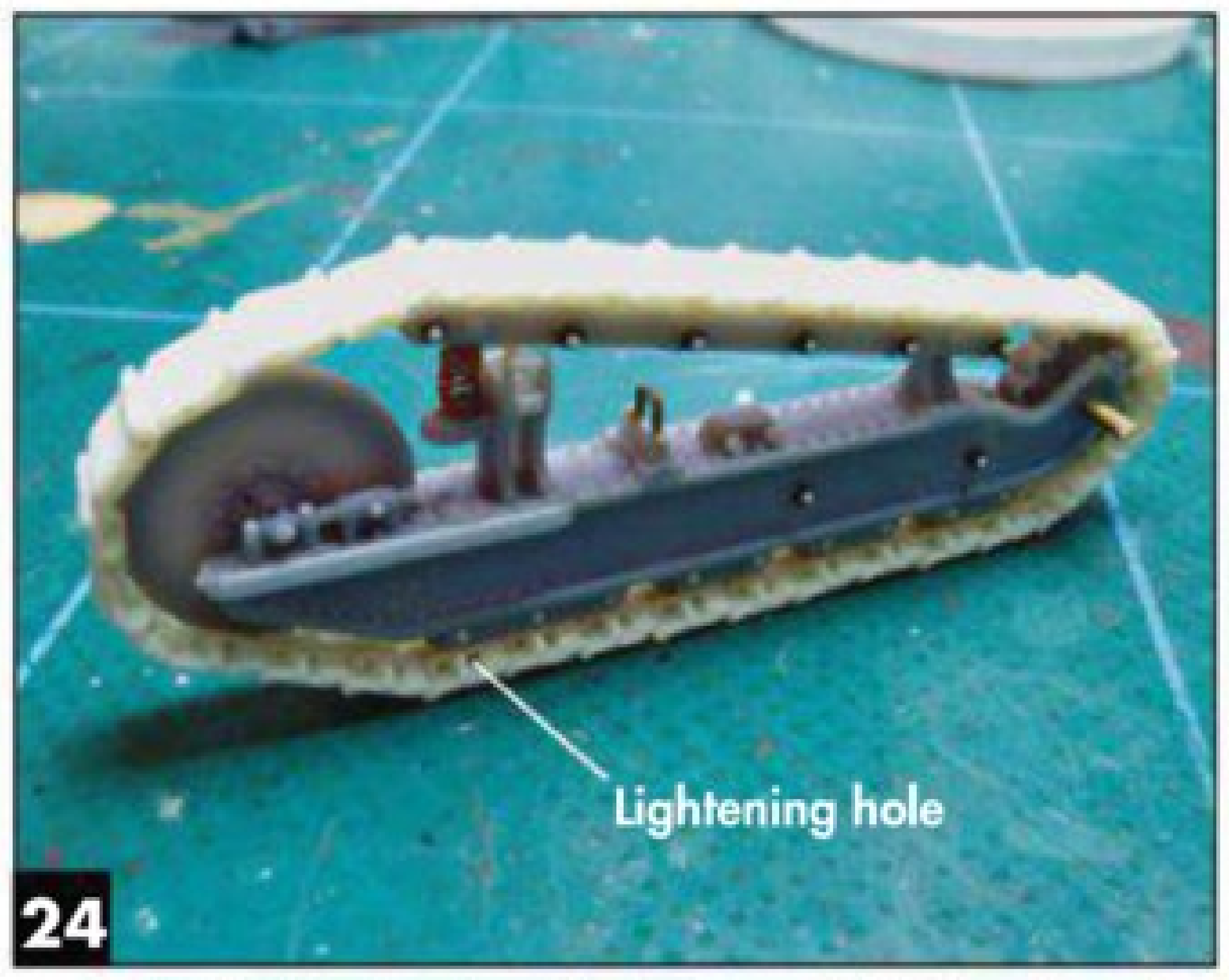
But it still didn't look right: The colors were too vivid and there was too much contrast between them. To homogenize the colors and produce a scale effect, I added a few drops of the Humbrol matte brown yellow to Testors Dullcote and misted the model. If you have mixed the tint right, you'll be able to control its density by how many coats you apply. Be sure to let each coat dry before adding the next, because it lightens up a bit when it's dry. Three coats gave me the dusty look I wanted.

After the Dullcote tint had thoroughly dried (I waited five days), I adjusted the colors with thin glazes of Humbrol matte scarlet (No. 60) and Humbrol matte grass green (No. 80). These variations of the basic colors added depth.

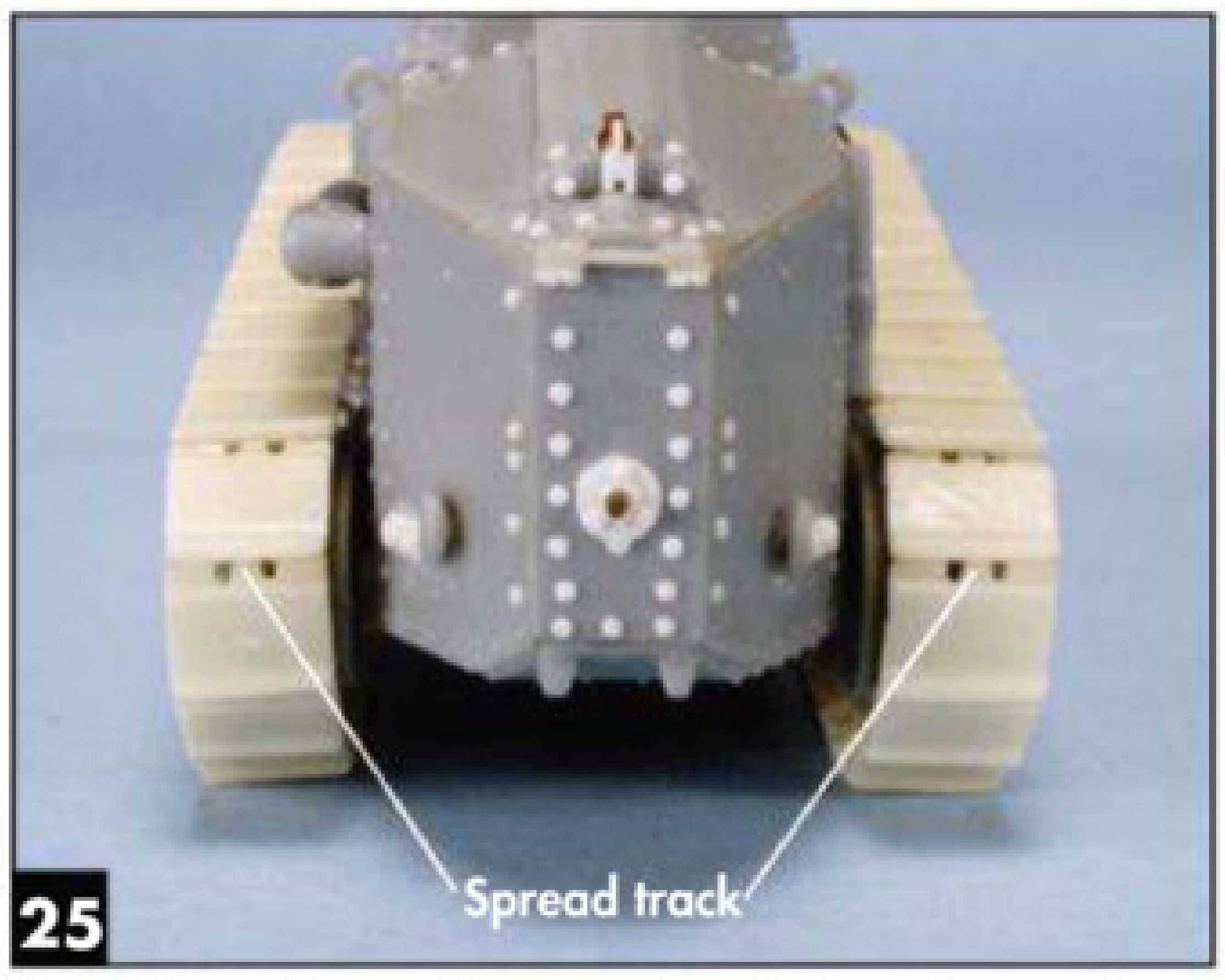
I brushed Pledge Future floor polish on areas that would receive decals and dry transfers, not just to smooth the surfaces but to protect the underlying camo colors. I hand-brushed the unit markings on the turret; the numbers are Archer dry transfers. To seal and protect the finish for weathering, I sprayed an overcoat of untinted Dullcote.

Weathering

A pinwash makes little rivets and other details stand out, **28**. Using burnt umber artist's oils thinned with regular old paint thinner — not turpentine — I placed a dab of the paint (about the size of a pea) in a bottlecap, added 8-10 drops of thinner, and mixed it to the consistency of ink. I applied this mix precisely with a tiny, pointed brush to one small area at a time. After it dried (about 20 minutes), I feathered the edges

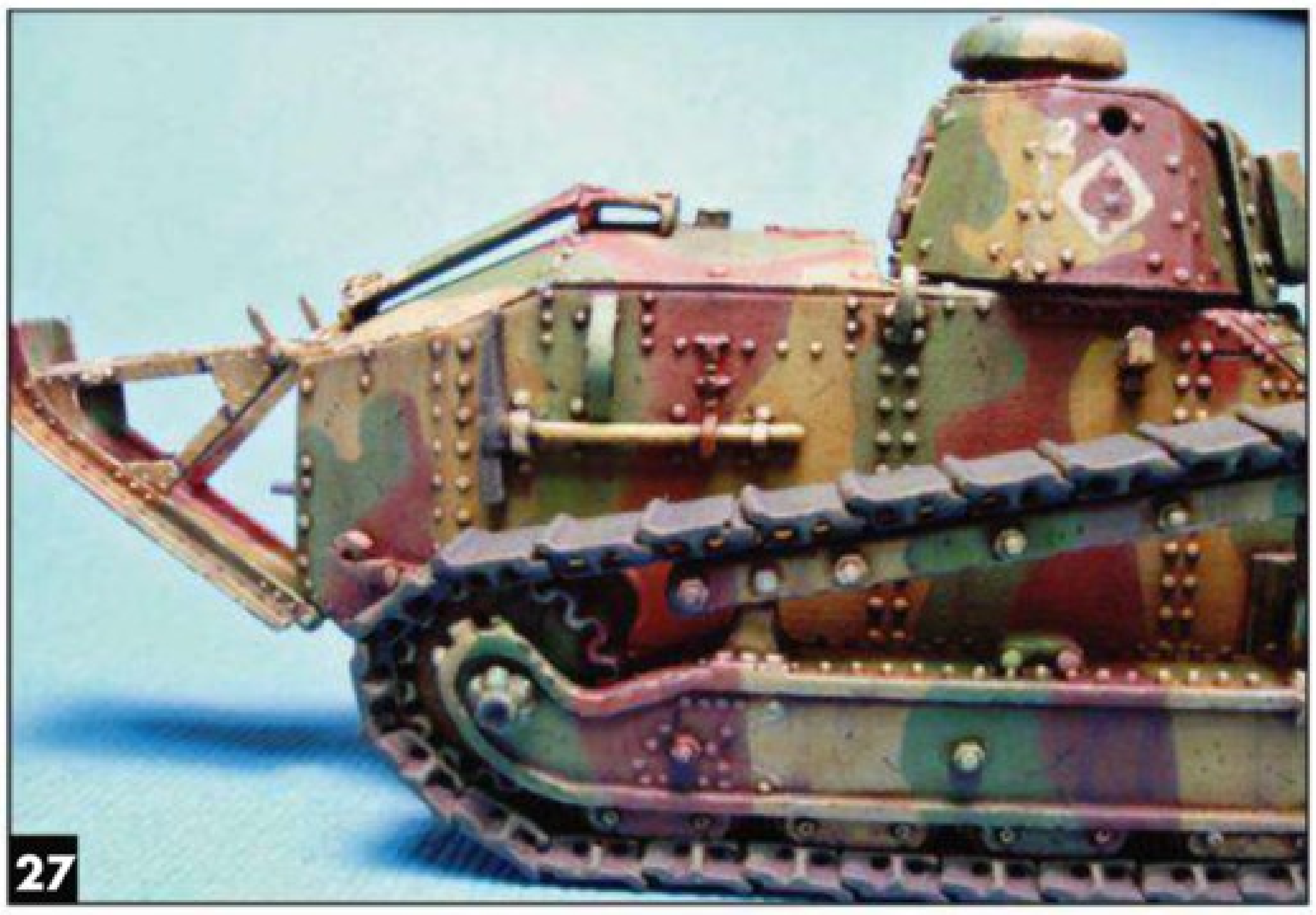


Bart drilled lightening holes in each link of track, making them look a little daintier.

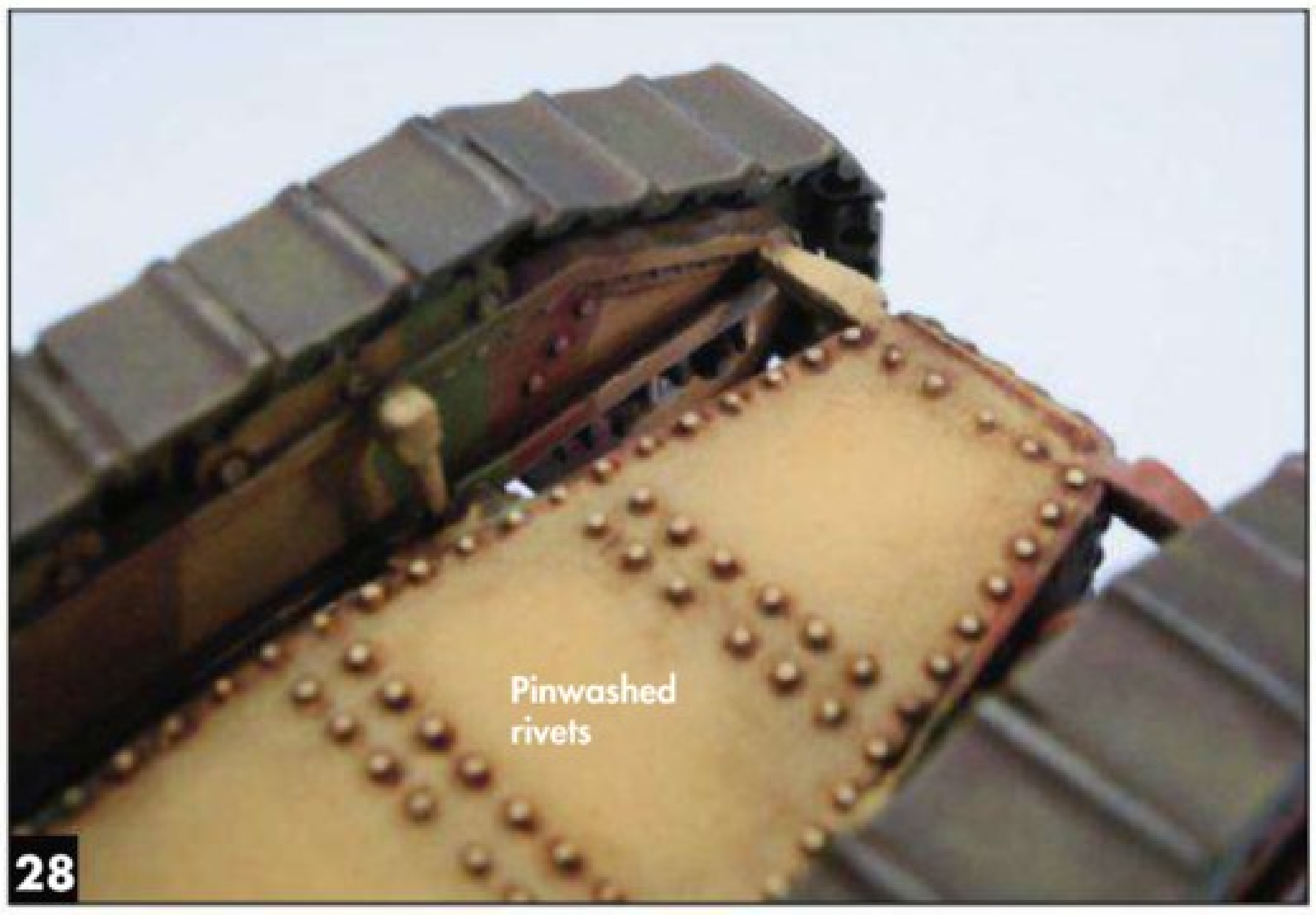


Note how the track spreads a little as it travels around the ends.

A dark brown prime coat also serves as a pre-shading color to deepen detail.



This hard-edged camouflage pattern is continuous from turret down to the running gear.



A highly selective pinwash calls out rivets and other tiny details.

using another brush dampened with clean thinner. This further emphasizes details and dirties up the finish a bit.

After the pinwash dried, I painted raised details using lightened versions of each color in the camouflage pattern. The colors were lightened with Humbrol matte pale stone (No. 121), not white; white washes colors out, while pale stone seems to brighten them up.

I applied a light dry-brushing of Humbrol matte brown yellow lightened with a bit of pale stone across all the camouflage colors. Then I glued on the tail skid.

Some light streaking on vertical surfaces simulates rain wash and grime. I thinned Humbrol track color (No. 173) and brushed varying levels of streaks. After they sat a few minutes, I faded them with a wide brush damp with clean thinner.

I added chipping and scratching sparingly. For a dimensional look, I apply a highlighted shade of the chip color, then follow with a mix of track color and flat black, making the effect more subtle and varied. Less is best here, especially in 1/72 scale.

I base-coated the tracks with track color, then dry-brushed with Humbrol matte tank gray (No. 67). Once that dried, a light dry-brushing replicated worn metal. Again, this was done sparingly with a mix of raw umber artist's oils, Model Master flat black, and silver printer's ink (the kind used on printing presses, not computer printers). An additional dry-brushing of Humbrol matte dark earth further blended the paint effects on the track. Then I glued the running gear to the hull.

After hand-brushing the muffler, tools and mounting hardware with various Humbrol and Testors Model Master colors, I airbrushed everything with Testors Dullcote.

In the end, I tried out a bunch of new tricks, learned a lot, and had my patience thoroughly tested. The model may not win any trophies, but I'm happy with it. **FSM**

Postscript: I'd like to dedicate this build and article to the memory of my grandfather, Bartolomeo Cusumano (1895-1978), who served with the U.S. Army in World War I.

SOURCES

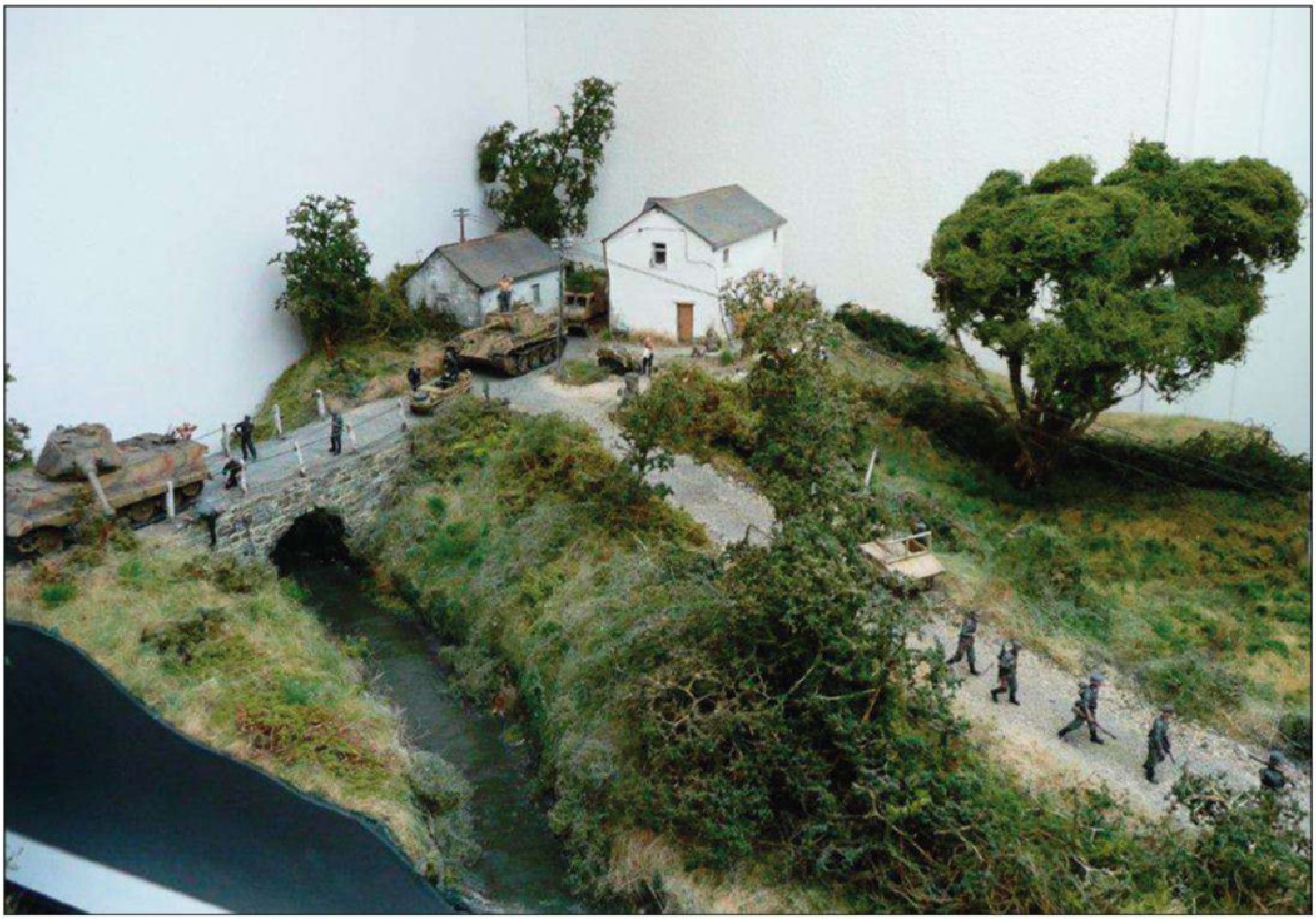
Dry transfers, Archer Fine Transfers, www.archertransfers.com

Photoetched-metal detail set, Part, www.part.pl

Resin replacement tracks, Steelwork, from Tracks & Troops, www.tracks-n-troops.com

Hold & Fold photoetched metal work station, The Small Shop, www.thesmallshop.com

Bart's M1917 is ready to roll into battle "over there." Built in America, it was essentially the same as the French-designed Renault FT-17 but produced too late for The Great War.



Scratchbuilt grass, bushes, and buildings bring Andrew's 1/72 scale World War II diorama to life.

Build small-scale groundwork and vegetation

Create a realistic scene with basic techniques

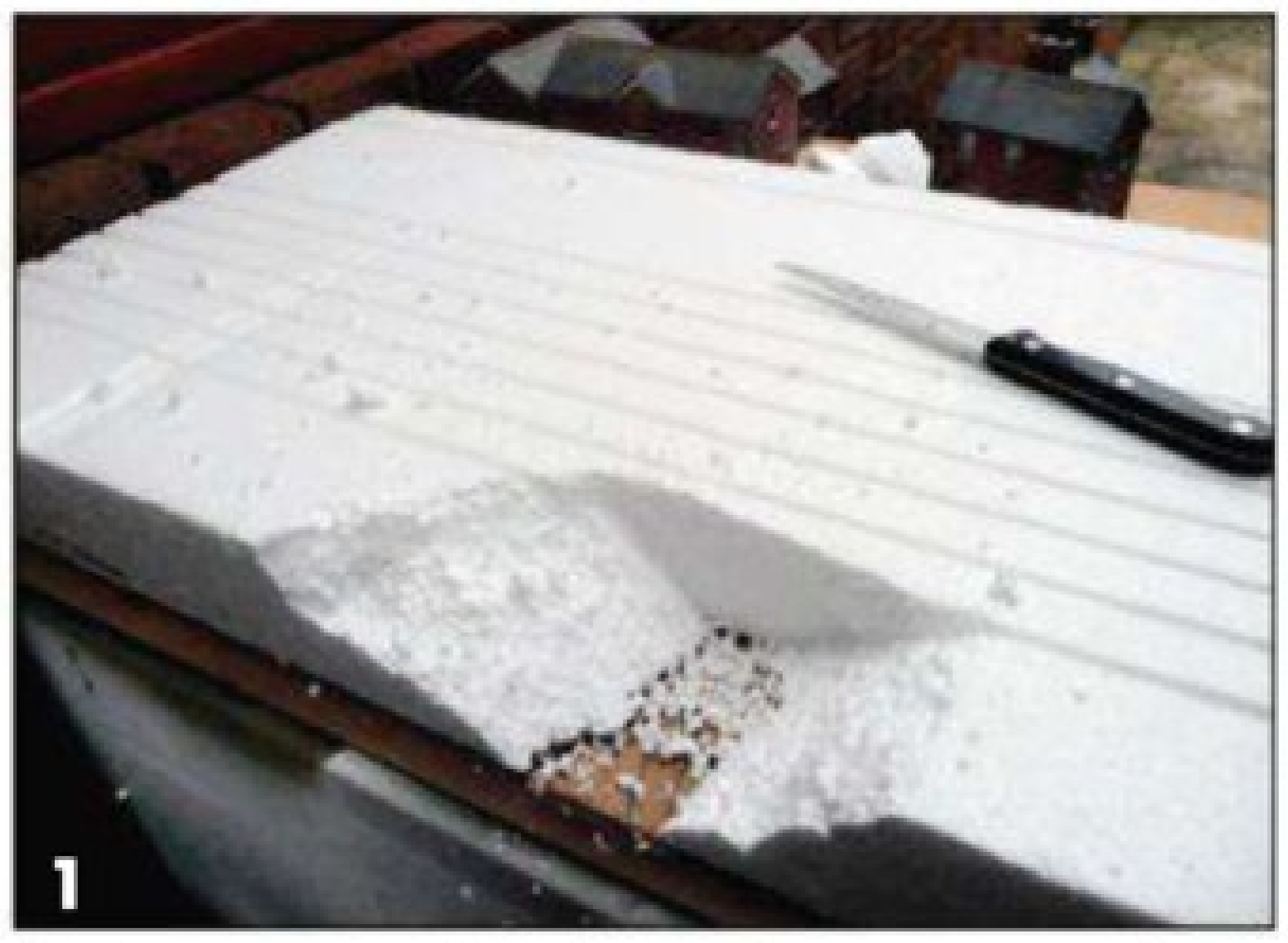
BY ANDREW ARGENT

For the past few years, I have been inspired by the landscaping on certain model railroad layouts. It made me want to replicate the small-scale realism on a World War II diorama. I decided to build a realistic scene from Normandy in the summer of 1944, and scratchbuild most of the groundwork.

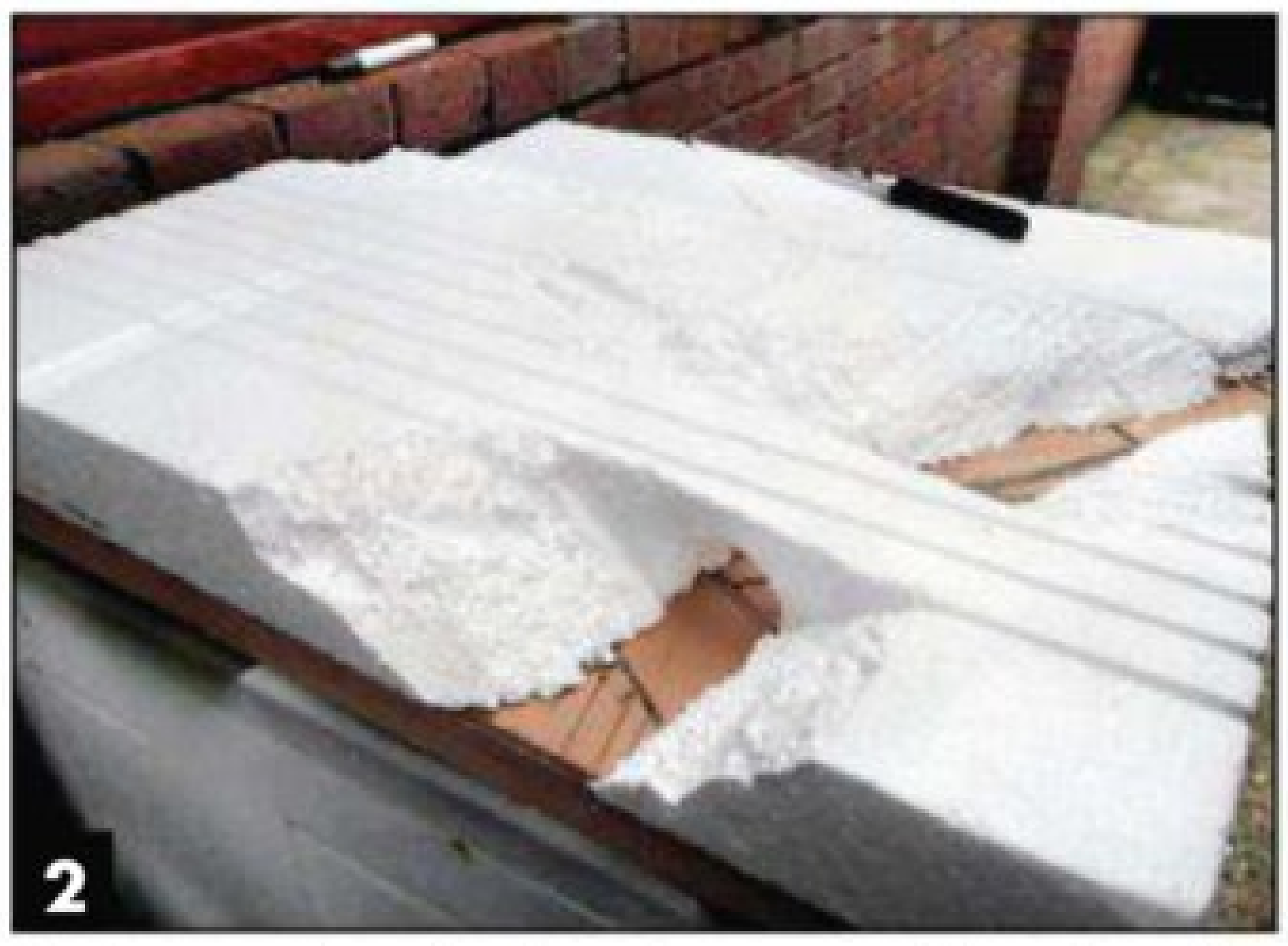
It is essential to plan a diorama with a sketch or have a picture in your head of the completed project. I wanted a road to lead over a bridge with a junction leading to a small village.

From the base up

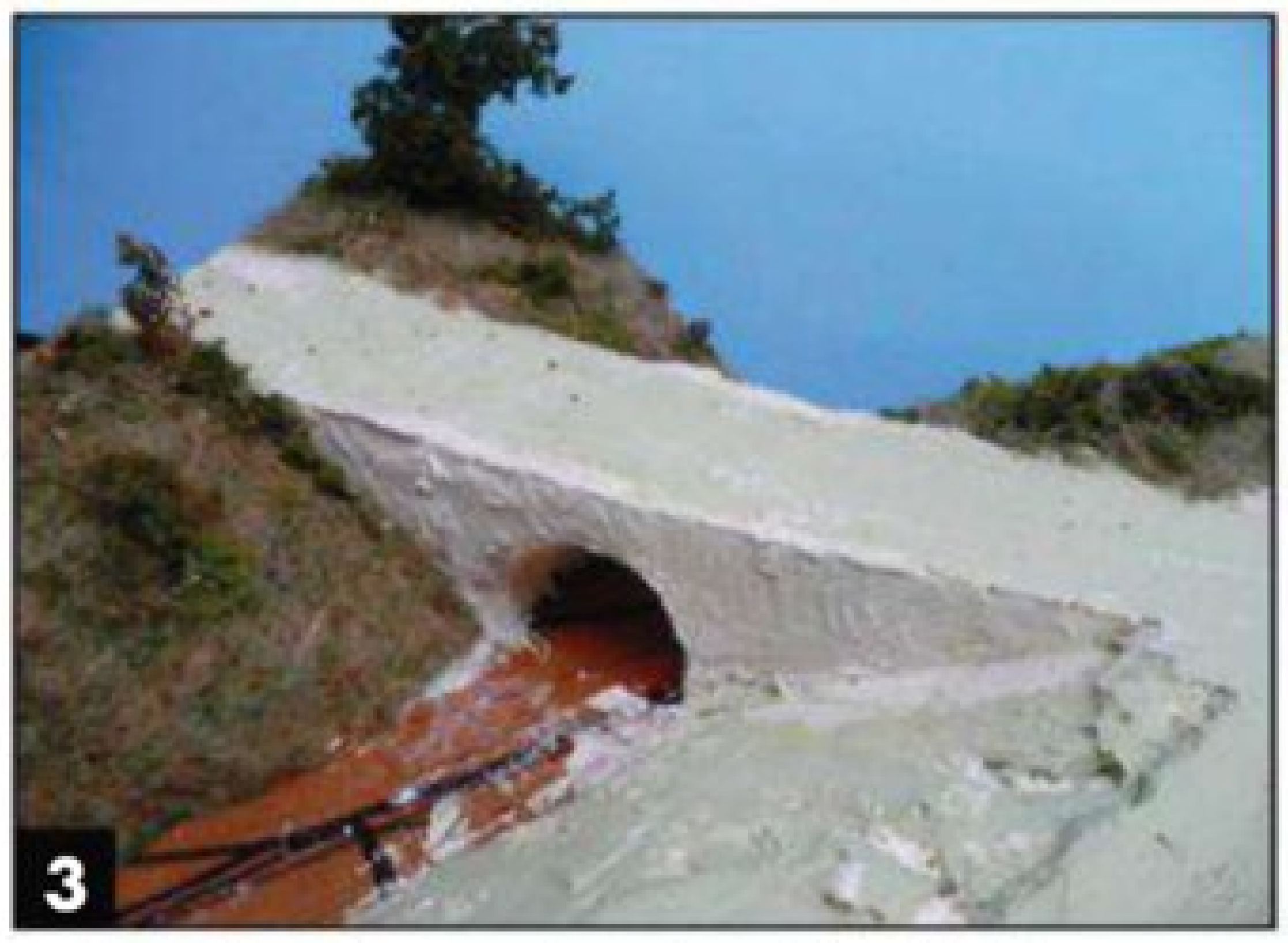
First, I cut and sanded a thin piece of plywood 2' x 2'. Then I cut a piece of styrene foam to fit over the plywood, **1**. I cut and sculpted the foam into a rough shape of the bridge and river, tapering the land at one end. Then I glued it to the wood with strong wood glue, **2**. Make sure to keep an eye on the dimensions and the size of the models you'll be using. You don't want the road to be too narrow. I test-fitted a 1/72 scale King Tiger before I cut it. If that fit, anything would.


1

Andrew starts with a large piece of styrene foam for the diorama's base.


2

Andrew sculpts the base into a rough outline of the bridge and river he envisioned, then glues the base to the plywood.


3

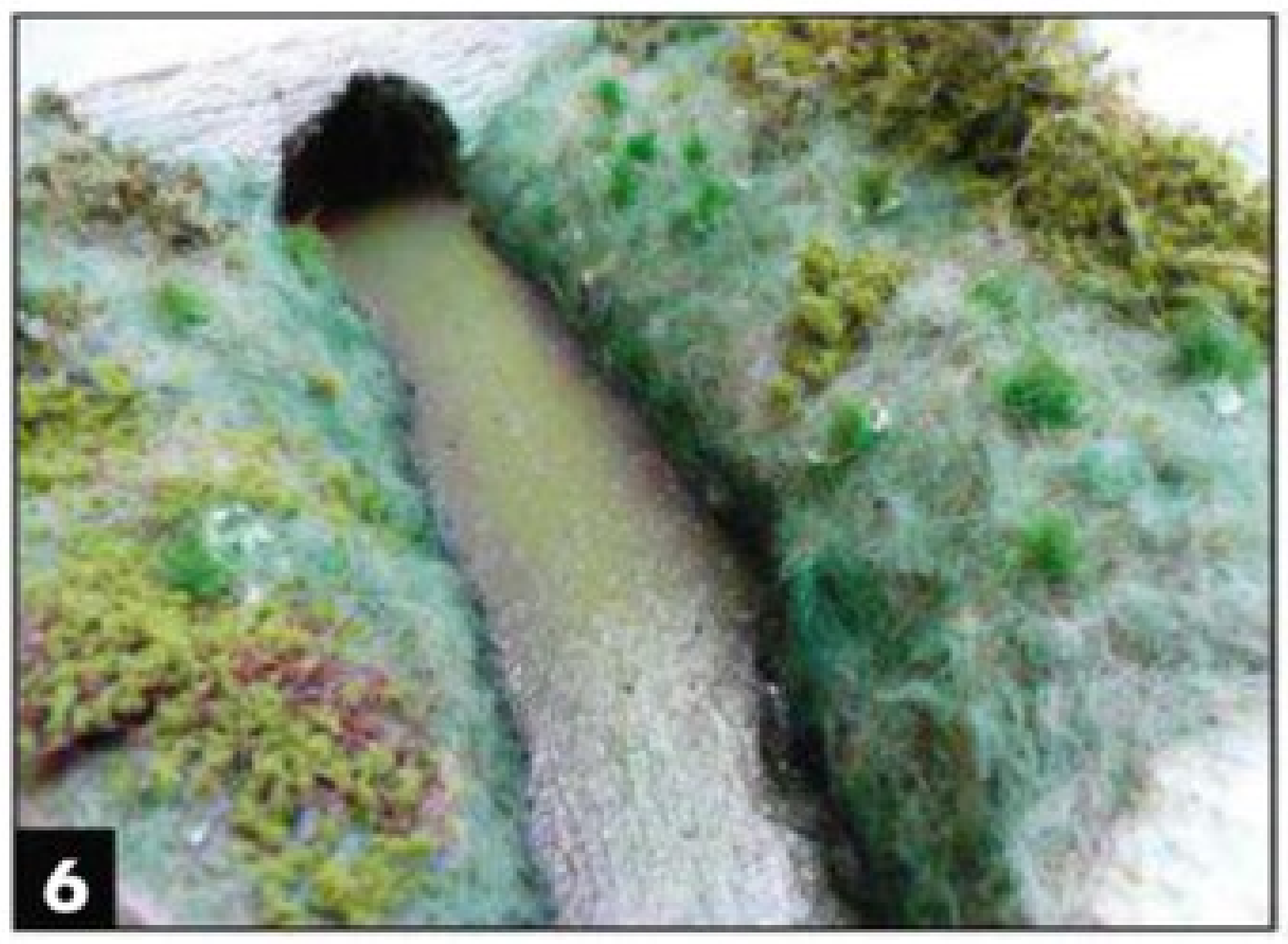
Using a liner from a hanging plant basket, Andrew creates a grassy bank leading to the river.

4

Andrew pulls apart random pieces of plumber's hemp to make bushes.

5

After painting the bushes dark brown and spraying the pieces with Woodland Scenics cement, Andrew places the bushes in a shoebox and covers them in Woodlnd Scenics fine turf.


6

Instead of one thick coat, Andrew pours clear resin for water a little at a time, allows it to dry, then adds another layer until the water reaches Andrew's desired depth.

With the bridge hollowed out, I mixed a good bit of spackling paste to spread over the entire base. I mixed a little wood glue into the pate to prevent cracking and improve adhesion to the styrene foam.

For the grass on the banks, I took the liner from a hanging plant basket and glued it down with Woodlands Scenics cement. Once it was dry, I pulled at the surface with a toothpick to tease it up and make it look like it was growing. Then I airbrushed thin, subtle shades of green on the grass. Varying the shades creates a realistic look. I pulled small clumps from the basket liner, sprayed them a darker green, and added them to the grass banks. Again, keep this random for realism, **3**.

To create bushes, I used rubberised horsehair or plumber's hemp. I pulled off a piece and formed it randomly, **4**. I sprayed with a dark brown, let it dry, then sprayed with Woodland Scenics cement. Next I put it in an empty shoebox, sprinkled Woodland Scenics fine turf over it, and shook the box; turf stuck to the bush, **5**. I emptied the excess back into the bottle; if you spray the bush when it's in the box, you won't be able to save the excess because it will stick to the box. I created several different bushes this way in different sizes and added them to the grass areas.

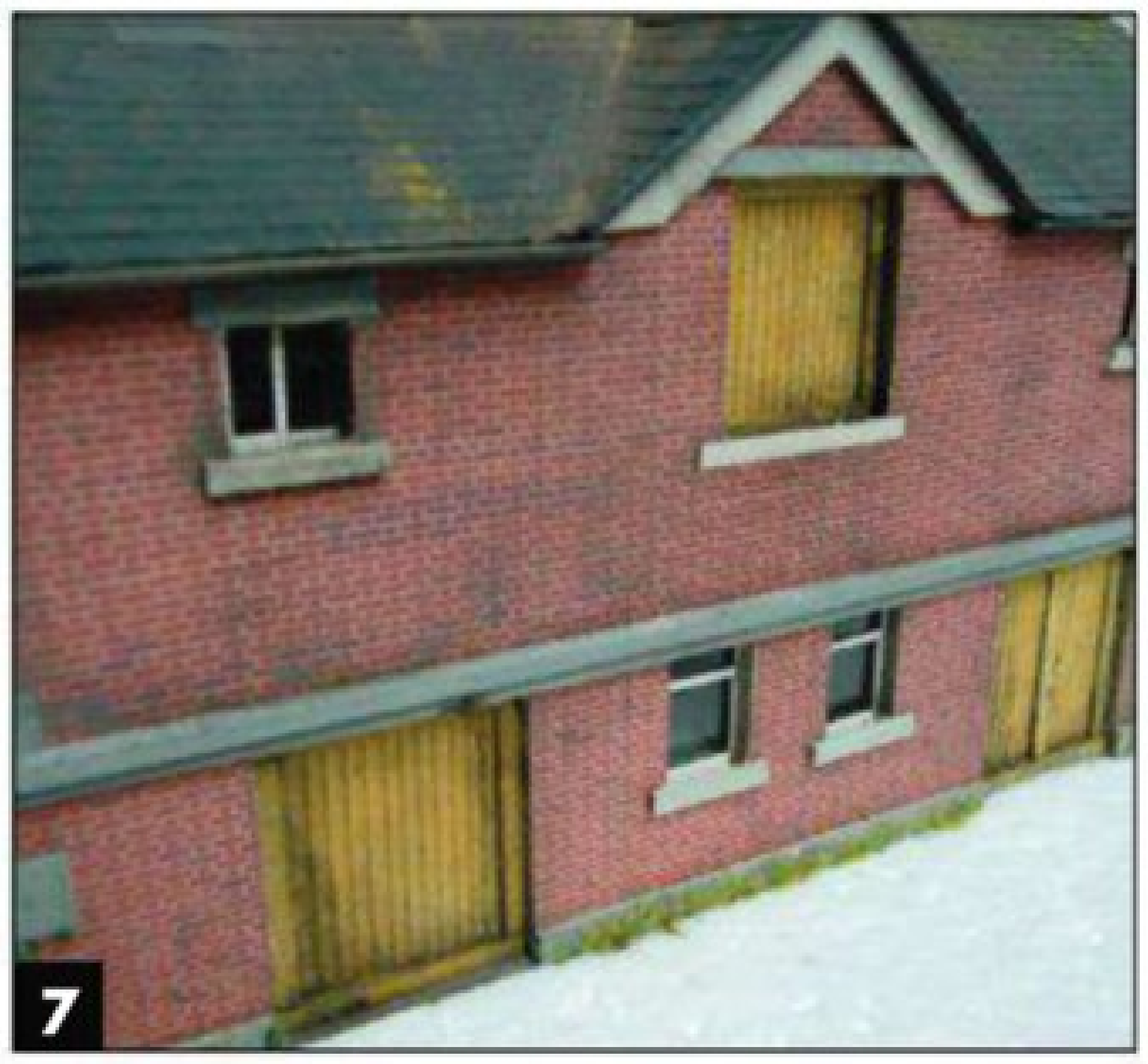
Next I painted the riverbed a dark green, adding dark brown to the paint while it was still wet to paint the banks darker. Once the paint dry, I poured in clear resin and let it dry for 24 hours. I repeated this twice to get the depth I wanted for the river. Pouring one thick coat won't produce the result you are looking for. To ripple the water, I dipped a toothpick in wood glue and dragged it across the surface of the resin to form lines of glue. It turns clear when dry and creates very convincing ripples. Once again, keep this random for realism, **6**.

Constructing the buildings

To start on the buildings, I worked out the dimensions and drew them on empty cereal boxes. I cut out the square structures from the cereal boxes and cut out the windows and door openings. I covered them with brickwork paper and gave them a diluted wash with thin brown acrylic paints to give the impression of age.

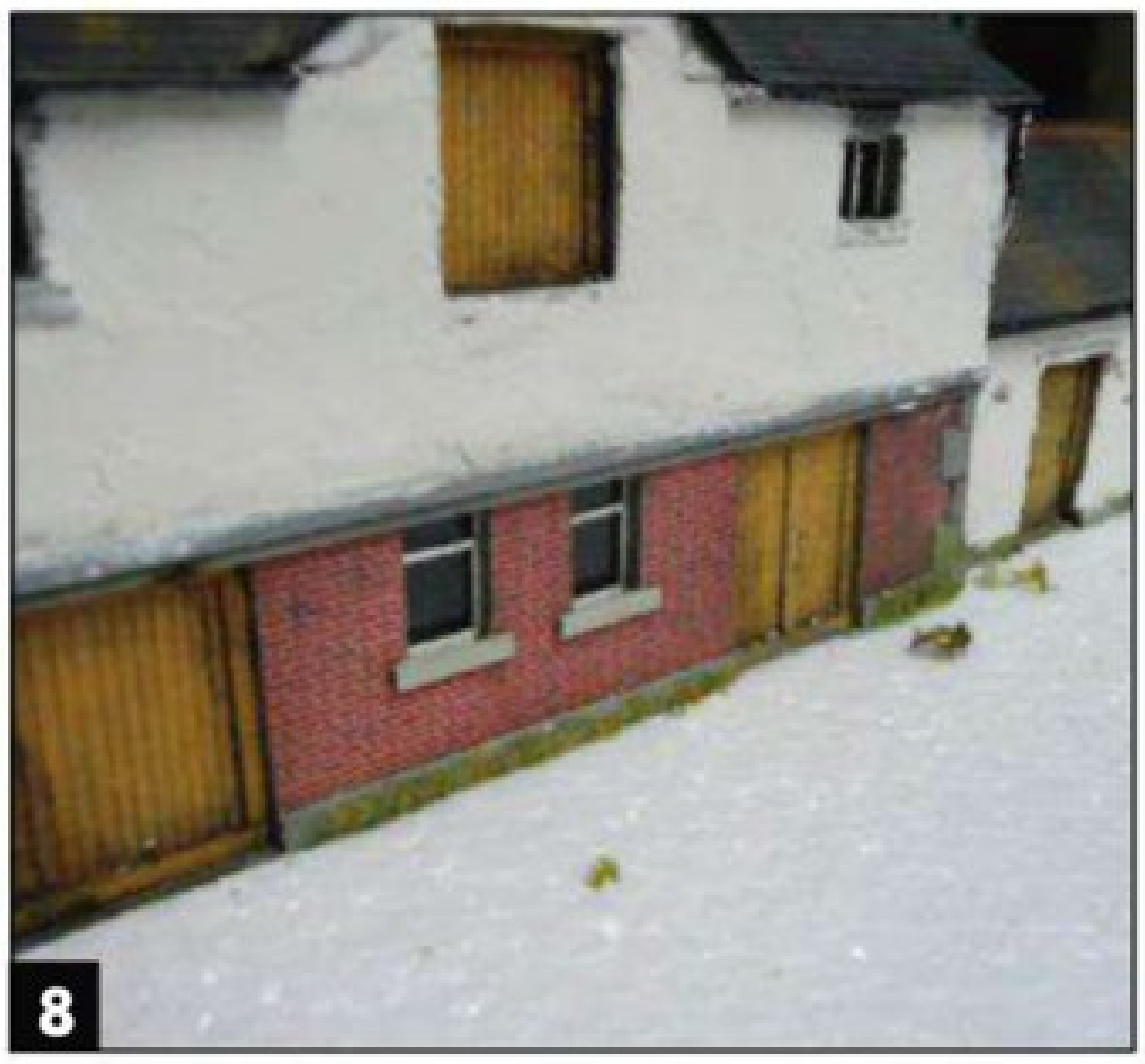
I made the roofs by bending stiff card stock the size of the building in half to form the initial shape and glued it the structure. Then I cut strips of card about 5mm wide and the length of the building and glued them to the roof for tiles. I worked from the bottom up on both sides of the roof, leaving a suitable overlap. I created individual tiles by scribing lines down the strips with a sharp blade. To finish the roof, I cut and bent a piece of card to form the ridge tiles on the top. I cut more card to form stonework around the windows and doors, and painted the structures using a mix of paint with a little talcum powder for texture. I used thin straws for drain pipes, and straws cut in half for gutters with brackets made from thin strips of cardboard, **7**.

I painted everything with acrylic paints and the buildings looked very convincing. However, once they were dry and I was looking at the finished buildings, I didn't think they fit the particular style I was after. I decided to render them as I would a full size house. (I'm a builder by trade.) I mixed fine spackling paste with wood glue and carefully applied it over the buildings with a small craft trowel, **8**. I kept in a few imperfections, as you would expect to see in the real cement render on a full-size building. I also chipped off small pieces of rendering to reaveak the brickwork underneath. When the paste was dry, I painted the buildings white and weathered with diluted pigment powders. I randomly added small tufts of grass around the bottom of the buildings to give them a more natural look. Now they looked like real houses in miniature, just what I had in mind for the French countryside, **9**.



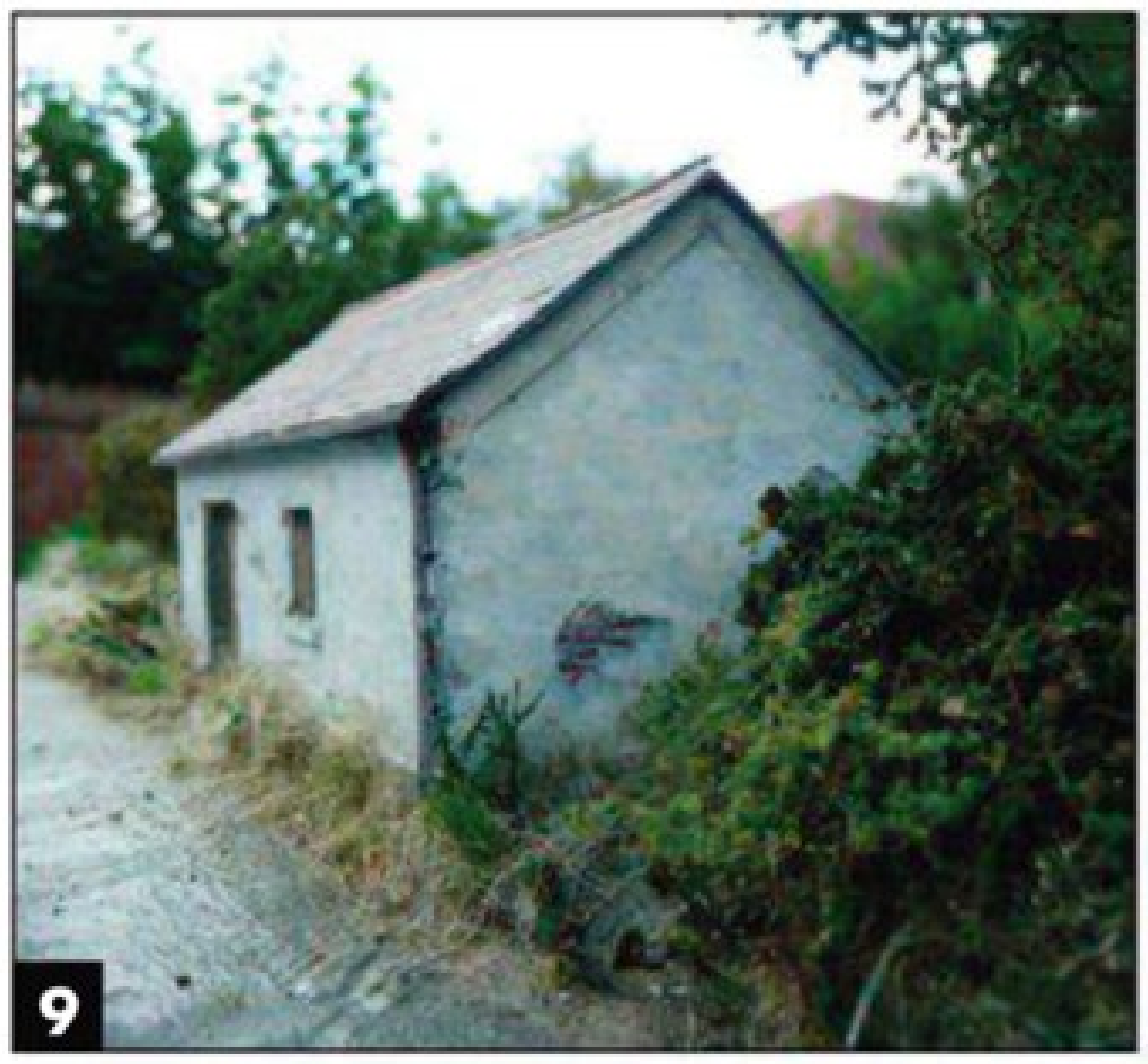
7

Andrew scratchbuilt houses from cereal boxes, brickwork paper, card stock, and straws.



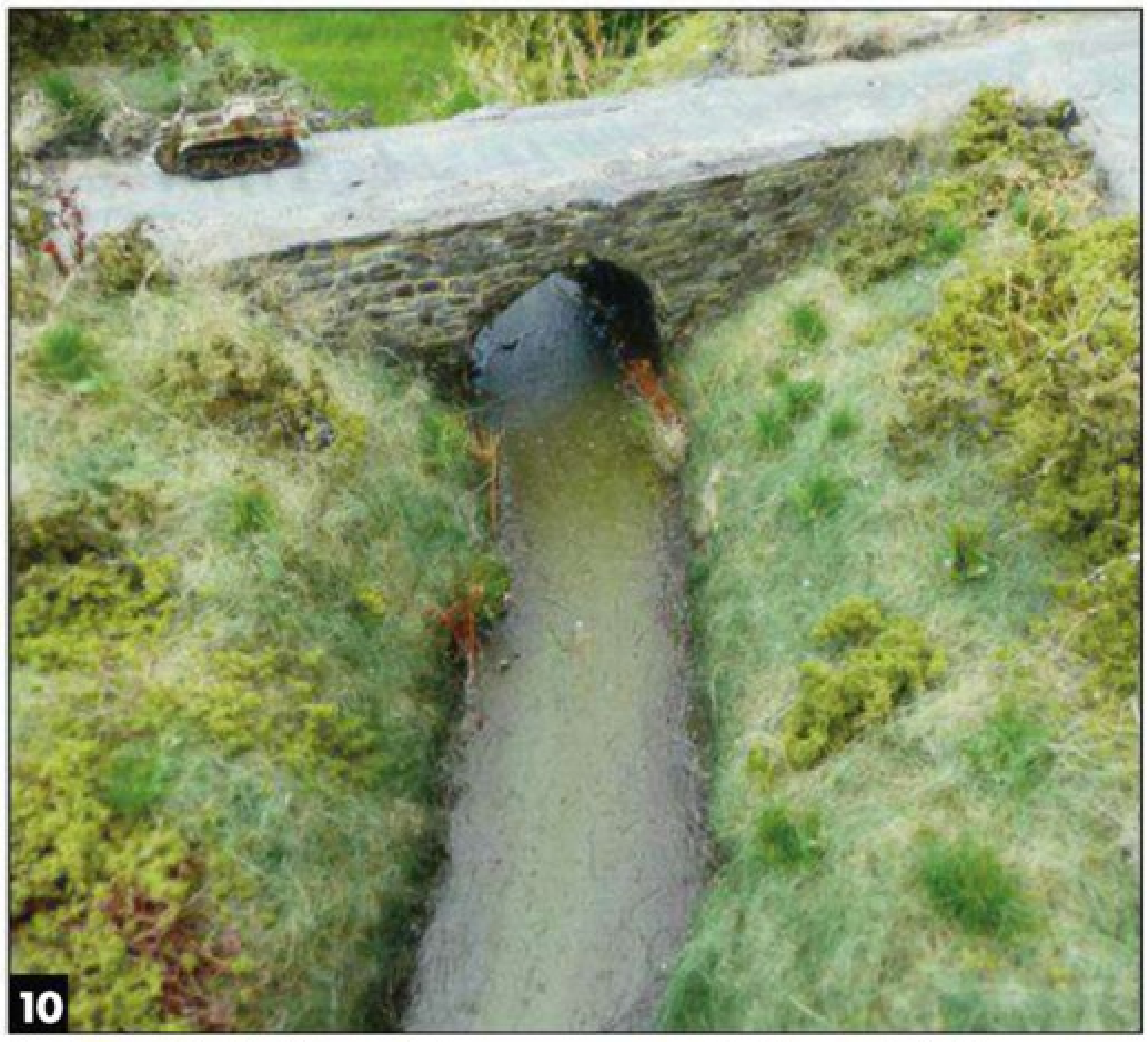
8

Unhappy with the brick finish, Andrew decided to plaster the buildings with a mix of polyfiller and wood glue.



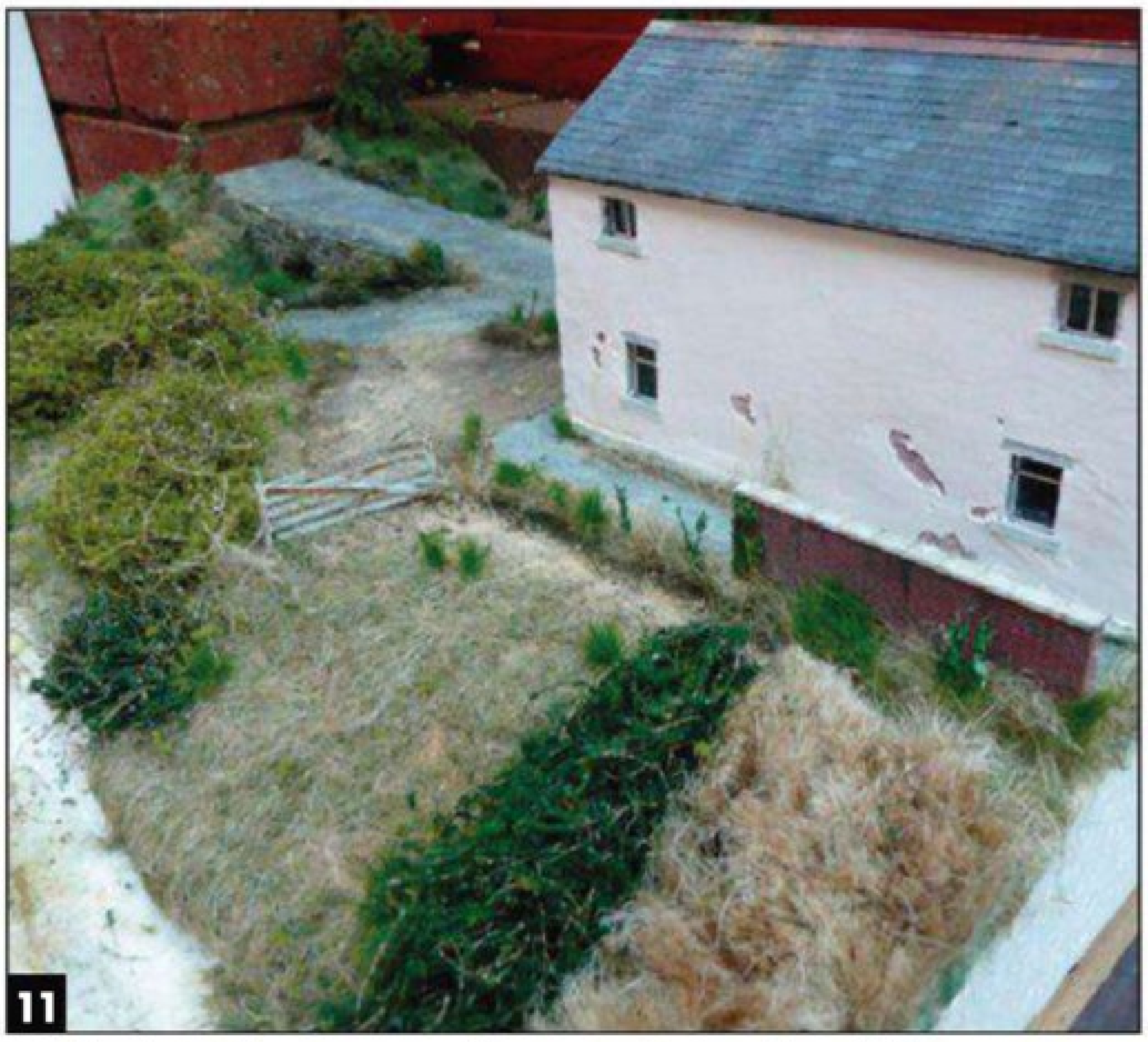
9

Andrew's finished houses would fit right into the French countryside.



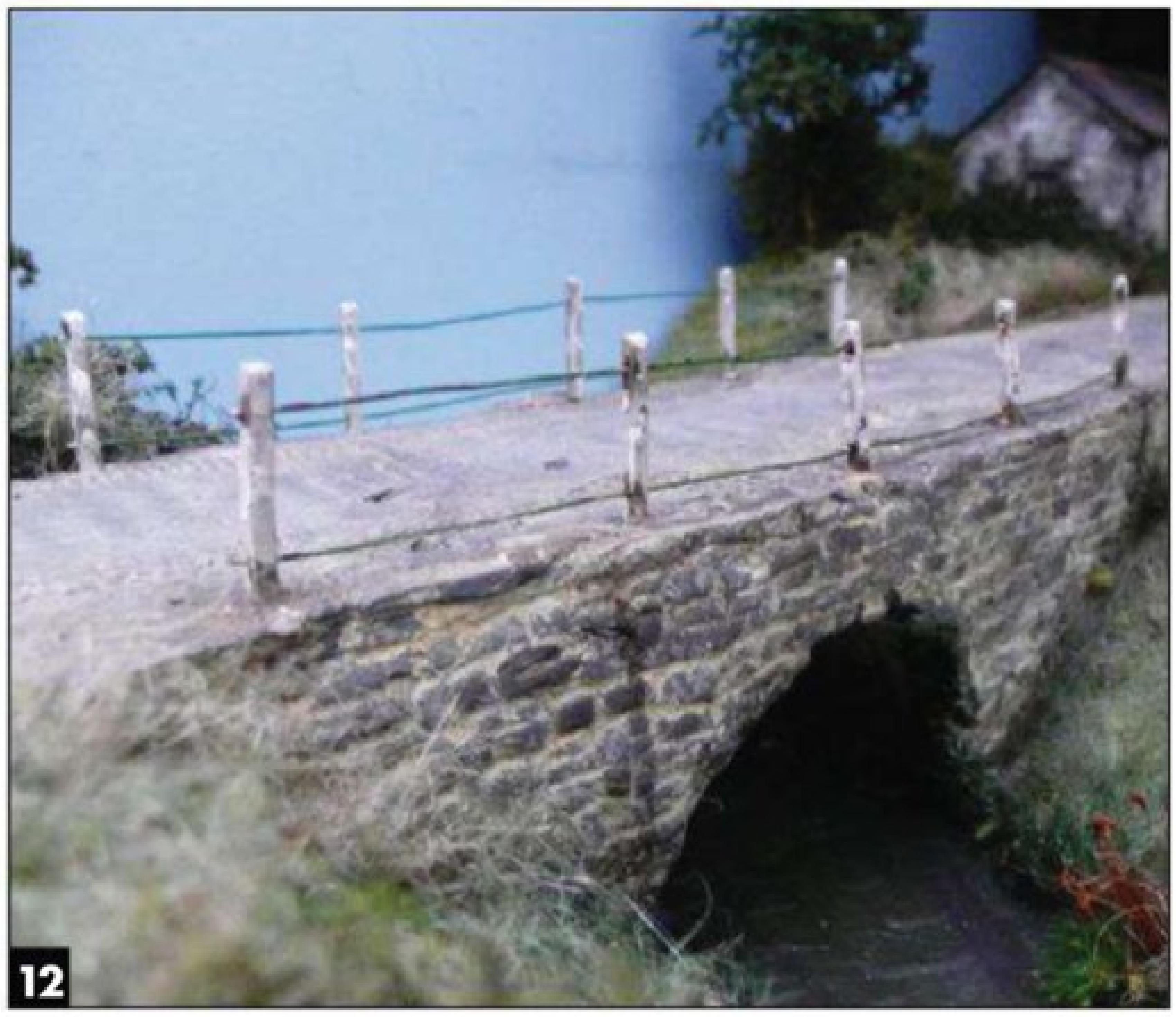
10

Andrew added bricks made from mortar onto his diorama's bridge.



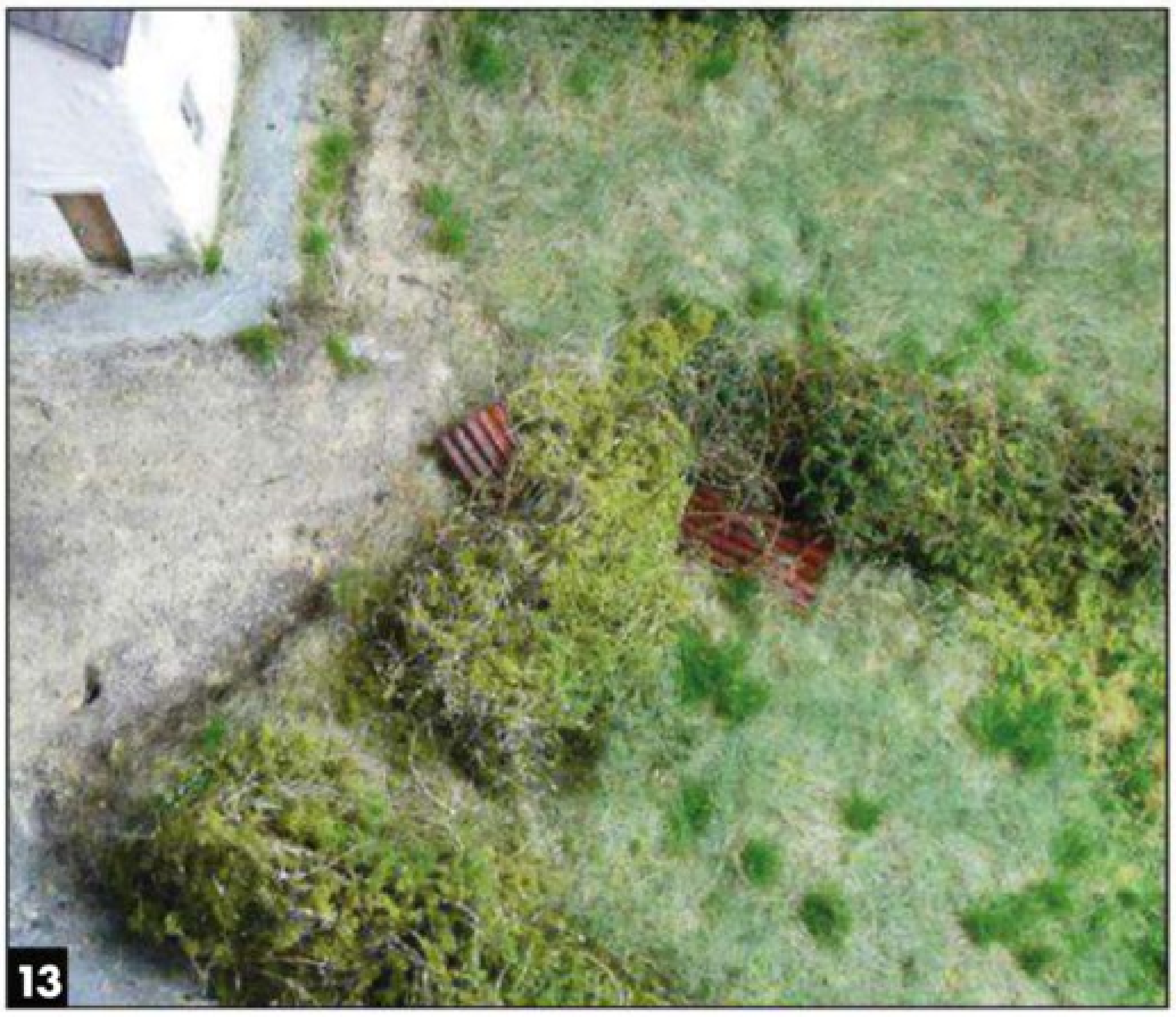
11

Paintbrush bristles were turned into a convincing wheat field.



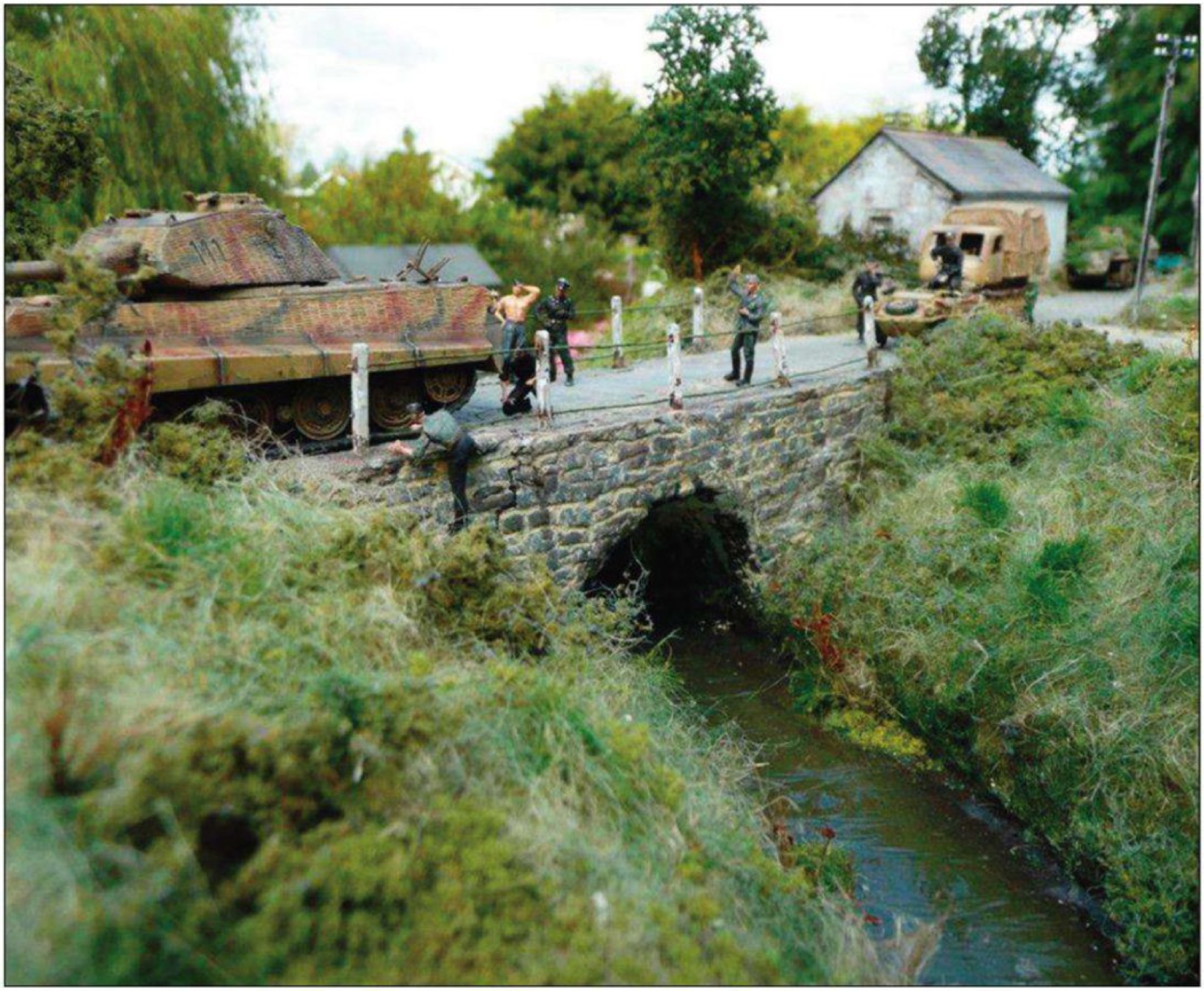
12

Andrew ran thin wire through strips of styrene to make a railing for his diorama's bridge.



13

Corrugated cardboard coffee cup holders were turned into old, discarded pieces of corrugated metal.



To top the diorama off, Andrew added a King Tiger and Panther from Dragon and white metal-vehicles from S&Q Miniatures.

Final details

I painted the road gray, sprayed it with Woodland Scenics cement, and sprinkled on fine dust.

I always have my modeler's head on, even at work, looking for things I could use in modeling. Bricklaying mortar spread out thin on a board can be scribed to produce bricks and stonework. Once dry, I simply snap the mortar into the single bricks from the ones I scribed earlier or crush some of it up for road dust and rubble. After placing the mortar, I weathered it using diluted pigment powders, **10**.

I made the fields the same way as the riverbanks and added more bramble bushes made from plumber's hemp to the perimeter of the fields. I made the grain or wheat field by cutting a large, light paintbrush and gluing down the pieces, building up the layers to form the field. I cut the bristles to a uniform length after the glue was dry, **11**.

To make the fence on the bridge, I cut thin strips of styrene for posts and drilled holes in them for railings. I glued the posts in place and then threaded thin wire through the holes. To weather things a little, I painted chips on the posts using a mixture of black and brown, **12**.

I cut corrugated card from coffee-cup holders (the kind that protect you from the heat) into small strips to represent old corrugated-metal sheets. I painted the pieces dark brown and finished them with rust-colored pigment powders. I added these to the undergrowth as if they had been discarded and had been exposed to the elements for a long period of time, **13**.

The power poles were one of the few things I bought for this diorama. I strung cotton for cables and ran it to the building. I put a little clear varnish on my fingers and ran them along the cotton, removing any furry look to the cotton.

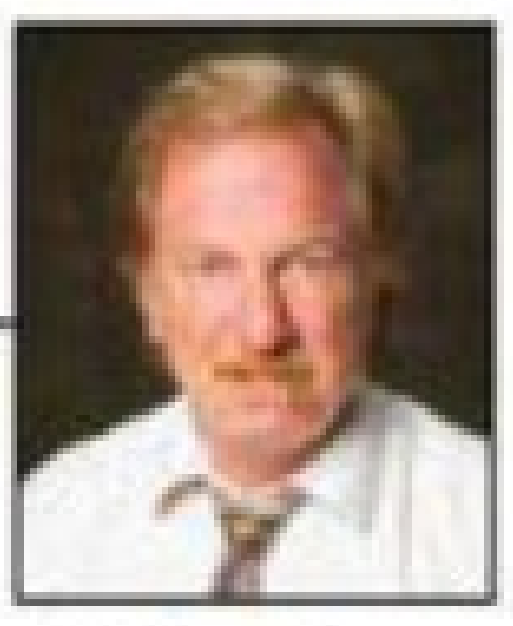
I used multipose figures from Prieser, swapping heads, arms, and torsos to create different figures. They are a bit fiddly to paint in this scale, but they look good when finished.

The vehicles in my diorama are a King Tiger and Panther from Dragon; the rest are white-metal vehicles from S&Q Miniatures. I painted all of them with acrylics and weathered with Mig Productions pigment powders and various washes. I created a chipped finish with a fine brush and Vallejo black/brown.

Looking at my finished diorama, I see the scene playing out: The King Tiger attempted to cross the bridge, but its massive weight caused a crack. The crew are checking the extent of the damage. Grenadiers are moving down the road and other soldiers are pulling foliage from the bushes to cover their vehicles from air attack. **FSM**

Questions & Answers

A clinic for your modeling problems



By Mark Hembree

Bending resin to your will

Q What is the best way to reposition resin figures without cutting? Can a heat gun or boiling water do the trick?
– Will Day
Santa Clarita, Calif.

A It depends on how much you want to change the pose. If the move is slight you might be able to do it by heating with a hair dryer, heat gun, or hot (not boiling) water; heat it up, bend and hold until it cools, heat and repeat as necessary. Work gradually; be patient.

However, if it's a dramatic change you may want to saw it up and smooth or resculpt the join with putty.

Make a clean start

Q I've read that the first thing you should do before assembling your model is to wash it so the paint will stick better. What should I use to wash the kit?
– Charles Parks
Nanjemoy, Md.

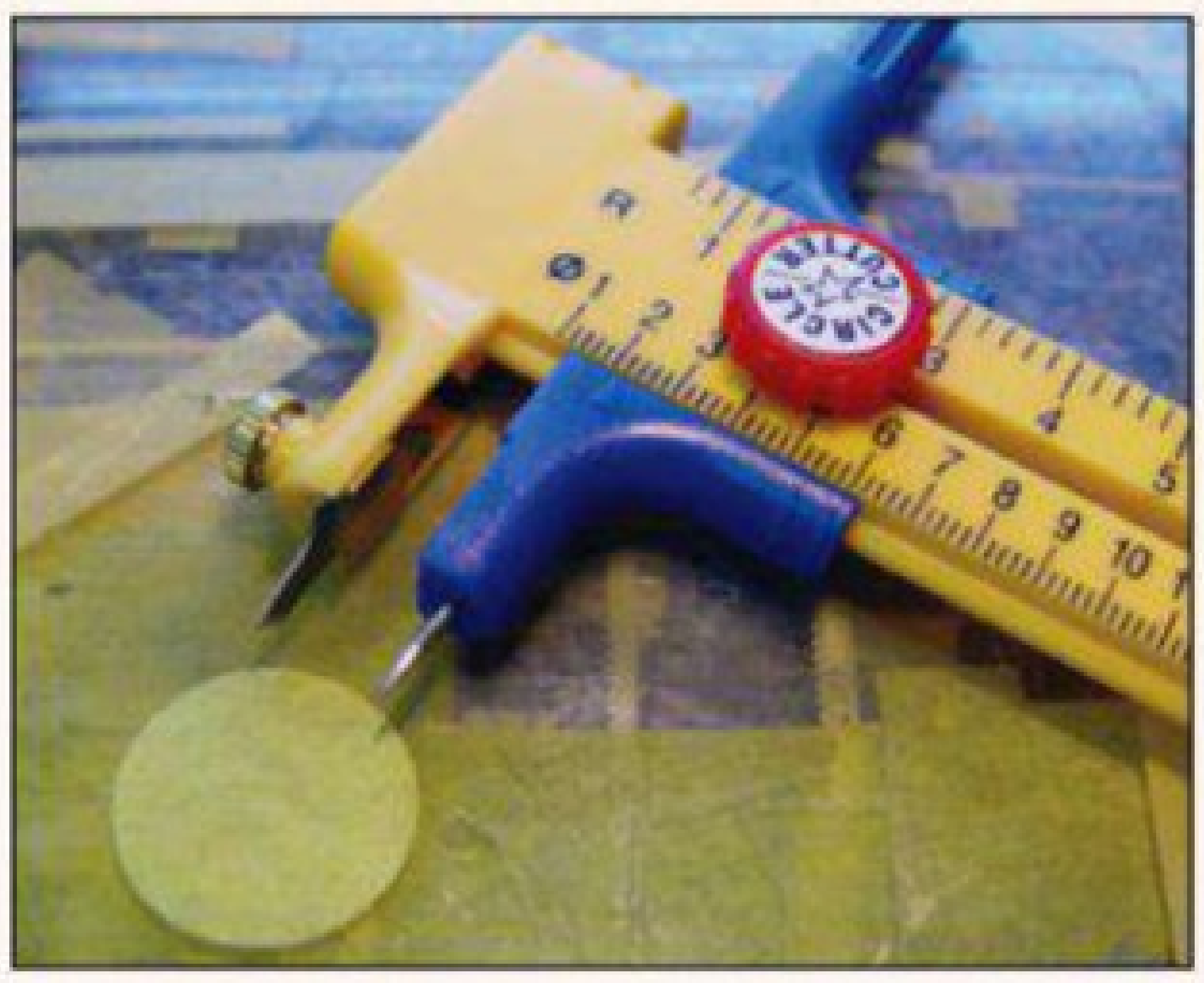
A Just a little dish soap will do. As with dish washing, I'll let parts soak a little. A soft brush (like an old toothbrush) can help. (Note: If you do that in a sink, make sure you have a fine strainer on the drain.) Rinse thoroughly and let the parts air dry.

You will notice the difference, as this removes oils left by manufacturing. You'll find the parts will be more receptive to glue and primer as well as paint.

Circular reasoning

Q I have yet to come up with a satisfactory way to mask round windows or hubs on landing gear for painting. I have a plastic template with various sizes of circles, and I use hobby blades to cut masking tape, but it is hard to cut a perfect circle mask, especially for smaller windows or hubs. I have tried Micro Kristal Klear for the plastic in really small windows, and I have a dental dam punch for very small holes. But I wonder if anyone makes any kind of paper punch that gives you several size alternatives and works on Tamiya or other brands of masking tape. Is there a punch-and-die set that would work?
— Richard Engar, Salt Lake City, Utah

A If it's a punch-and-die set you seek, have a look through the stuff you can find at Micro-Mark (www.micromark.com). Also, the Waldron punch-and-die set is an old standby; it's available at Roll Models (www.rollmodels.net). Another effective improvisation I've seen is to find metal tubing with the right inside diameter and use the end of the tube to cut out a circle. Or, you could use a circle cutter as seen here. You can find one like it at Hobbico (www.hobbico.com).



If you want to cut a circle out of masking tape, you could use a circle cutter like this one from Hobbico. Dennis Gerber photo.

Mr. Surfacer for Zimmerit?

Q I really liked the article on Mr. Surfacer in the November 2011 issue. Can Mr. Surfacer be used for Zimmerit?
– Duane Nollen
Oskaloosa, Iowa

A Thanks, Duane. Even though we know what you are talking about, it's only fair to explain to first-time readers who may now be wondering, "Mr. Surfacer? Zimmerit?"

Briefly: Zimmerit was a nonmetallic paste applied to German tanks, ostensibly to keep infantry from attaching magnetic mines. It can be seen in various patterns of ridges, depending on its application.

Gunze Sangyo, maker of Mr. Surfacer, defines its product as an acrylic resin agent with an organic solvent base. Aaron Skinner, author of our story, suggests thinking of it as a lacquer-based solution with granules. It's a surface treatment that can be used to prime, fill, or texture, to name just three uses. It comes in three viscosities: 500, 1000, and 1200. Like sandpaper, the higher the number the finer the grade.

For 1/35 scale armor, Mr. Surfacer is great for a rough-cast finish like a Sherman or KV-1 turret. But could Mr. Surfacer serve as Zimmerit in the Panzer Korps? Perhaps, but probably in smaller scales. I don't think you would want to build it up that thick on 1/35 or even 1/48 scale, but in 1/72 scale I can imagine coating the surface, waiting just a little bit (not too long, it dries fast), and then applying a rake or stamp for the desired Zimmerit pattern.

Important note: For cleanup, I'd suggest you use only Gunze's Mr. Color Thinner. If you use something else, it may turn your Mr. Surfacer to Mr. Useless Gum.

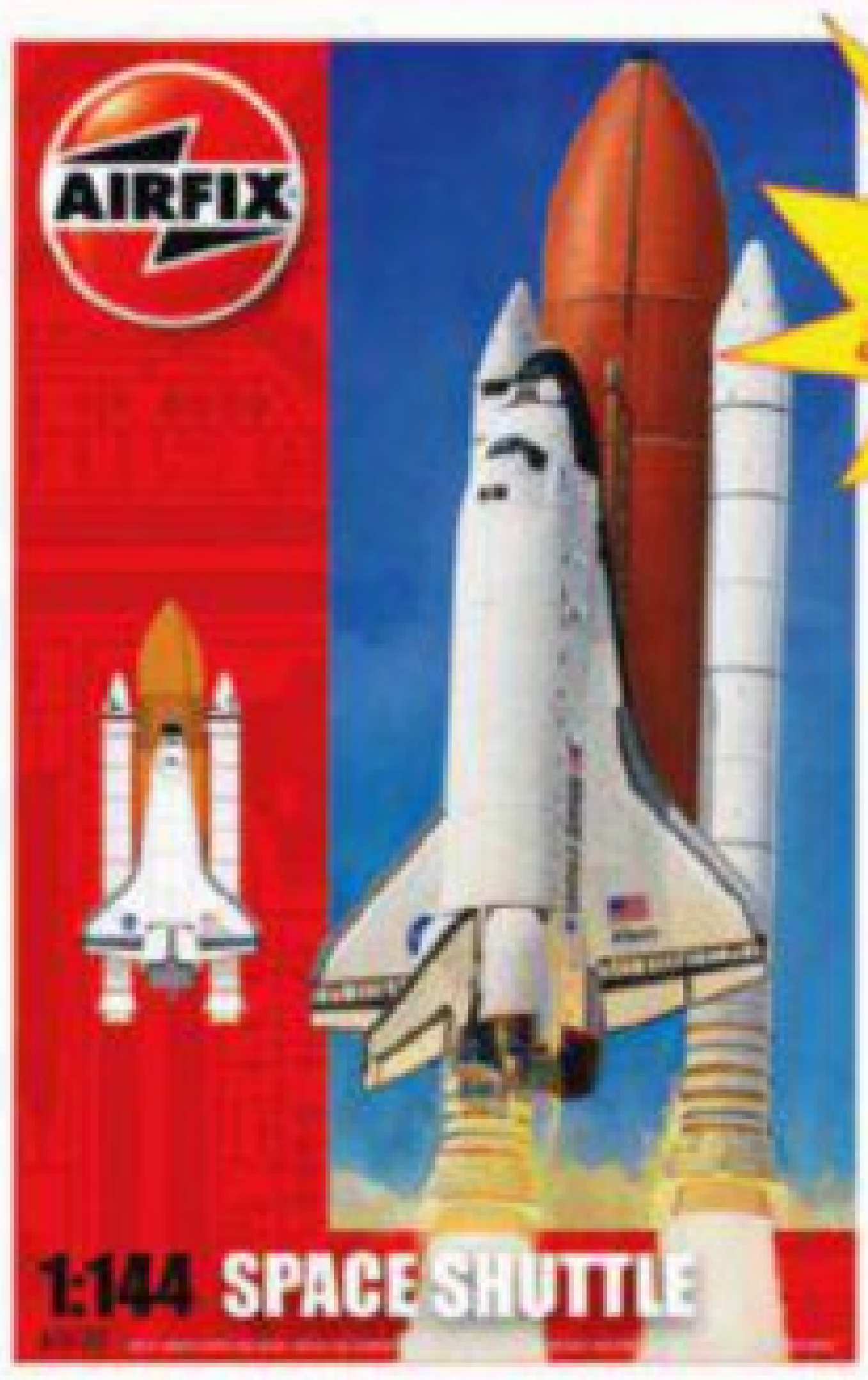
Banishing dust bunnies

Q I have a hard time keeping dust out of my paint jobs. I thought I had it figured out, but I just applied the main color coat to the main body panels of my current project, and there are a few specks of dust that found their way to the wet paint. So far, this project is turning out to be one of my better ones, so I really want a perfect (dust-free) paint job. A friend of mine said I would be better off leaving it alone, and the clear coat will hide it. I was wondering what your advice is.
– Scott Koenemann
Newark, Del.

A The first step: Leave it alone and make sure the paint is good and dry. Then, using a very fine grit (800 or 1000), sand off the dust speck. Wipe off the sanded area and, if necessary, touch up with more of the same color. If you're lucky, you can buff out with progressively finer grits to restore the sheen and not have to apply more paint.

Dust is tough, and wet paint will attract it. Before you paint, make sure the room is tidy. You can also spritz water into the air to knock down dust. If you have an exhaust fan or spray booth, turn on the fan 10–15 minutes before you start to paint.

Afterwards, cover the model as soon as possible and keep it covered until the paint is dry. Then repeat the first step! **FSM**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Reader Tips

Solutions and innovations

By Aaron Skinner

Just what the doctor ordered

I use a tall medication bottle to hold Pledge Future floor polish for dipping canopies (instead of pouring 10 times too much into a larger container). I can control the speed of dipping better, and when it's done it's easy to pour the Future back into the bottle.
– Irv Singer
Blue Bell, Pa.

The right sized bottle can make dipping clear parts in Future easier and less wasteful. Irv uses prescription medicine bottles, a perfect fit for long, thin objects such as aircraft canopies.

Safer nose weight

If you are concerned with the dangers of using lead powder to weight aircraft noses, consider tungsten powder. It is almost as dense as solid lead, so it takes up less room than shot. It is not very reactive and should remain inert with the glues or paints we use in modeling. And there are no health warnings attached to the material. Tungsten powder is available for weighting Pinewood Derby cars and golf clubs.
– Larry McClellan
Portland, Ore.

Safer nose weight 2

I am constantly surprised that modelers use lead to weight their kits. Try steel. It is 5/7 as heavy as lead, which is more than adequate for most applications. Small-gauge steel shotgun pellets should be easily available at any gun shop. They will fit almost any space and settle nicely into a puddle of white glue to make a custom-shaped weight. Best of all, they won't poison you, your family, your visitors, your neighbors, the garbage men, the environment — it's a no-brainer.
– Sam White
Pasadena, South Australia, Australia

Wire by fly wire

One of my favorite things to do when building my models is to use real wire in cockpits, engines, for brake lines, etc. This usually takes some pretty small-diameter wire. I have found a great source for this stuff. Look for lead wire at fishing supply stores (I found it at a Bass Pro Shop). Used for fly fishing, lead wire is available in diameters from .010" to .035". This wire is perfect for detailing engines — it is very pliable and looks much more realistic than molded-in wires or no wires at all.
– John Borgerding
Beloit, Wis.

Simple part catcher

Here is the simplest parts catcher ever! Take a large T-shirt and a stick (a yardstick is most effective) long enough to cross over your thighs when you are seated comfortably at your work area. Slide the stick through the shirt's arm holes side to side. Sit down and tuck the bottom of the shirt into your belt line. Then roll the stick under the T-shirt until it will stay on your legs. This forms a simple and effective pocket to catch most errant parts. Best of all, everybody has the materials in their closet! Model on!
– Jerry Geesaman
Centreville, Md.

Music dies, leaves wealth of parts

The six-disc CD player in my truck gave up the ghost recently and was replaced. Wanting to get the disks trapped inside, I took the unit apart and found many small springs, gears, motors, fasteners and shafts that would be useful in scratchbuilding var-

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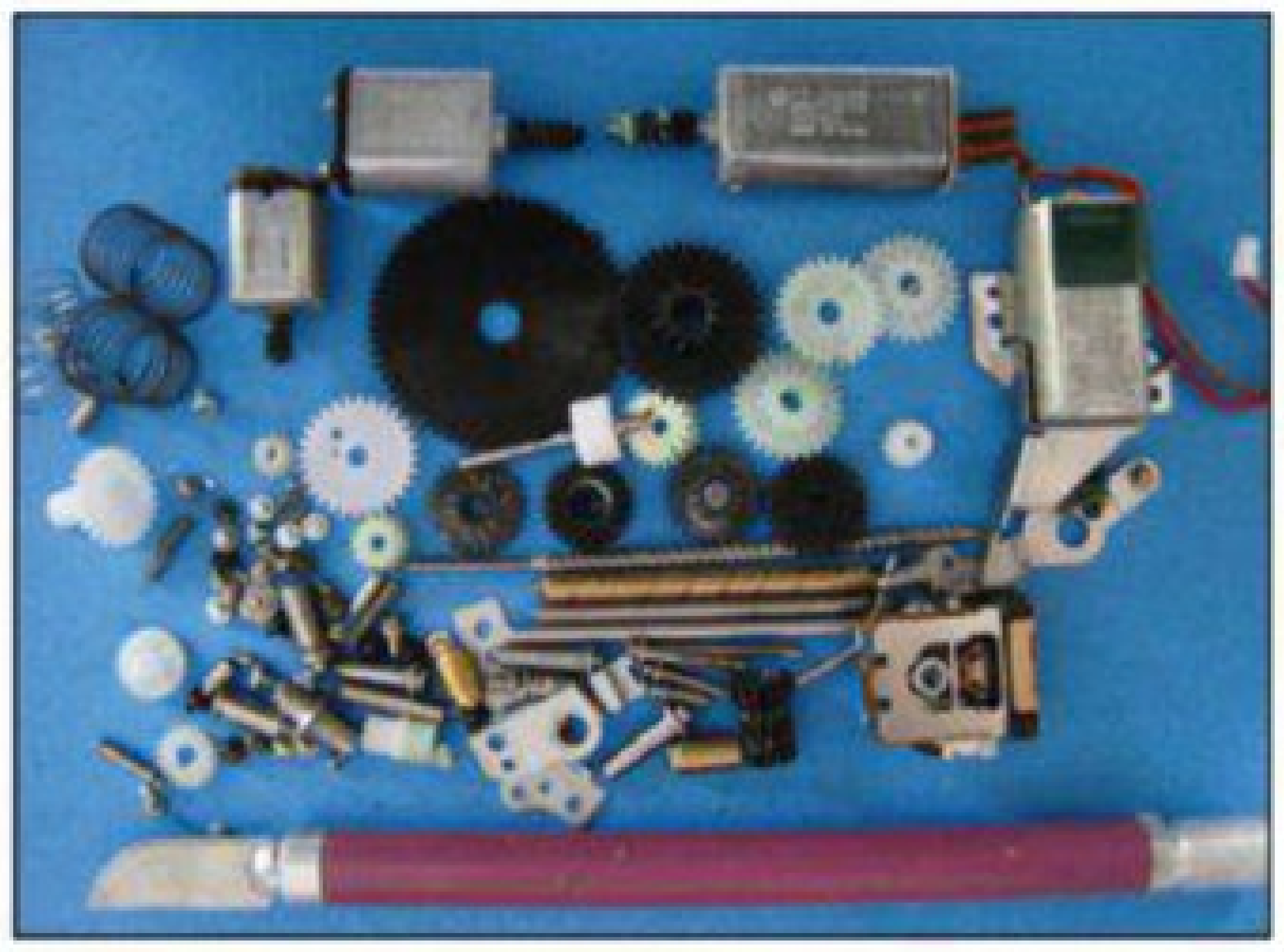

When Jason's CD player quit, he dissected it and discovered an abundance of detail parts.

ious scenes like a motor rebuild or a factory ruin. It only took an hour with small Phillips and flat screwdrivers and pliers to recycle dozens of great items, including four small electric motors. A stripped gear caused the malfunction, so I assume the motors are in working order.

– Jason Sloboda
Truro, Nova Scotia, Canada

Filling seams with caulk

I was frustrated by some of the wide gaps between wings and fuselages on some of my models and was longing for an efficient way to fill them. Recently, I was sealing the windows on my house with caulk and thought it was too bad I couldn't use this stuff on my models. Then I figured, why not?

I put a small amount of caulk on a plastic card and gently filled in the seams of my Revell B-25J Mitchell with a toothpick, making sure the caulk filled them completely. I then wet my finger and ran it along the joint and *presto!* a really smooth finish.

I recommend a quality caulk that is sandable and paintable. My results show there is no need for sanding if you get it right the first time. The good news is that if you make a mistake or don't like it, caulk wipes up well when it is fresh. This method is probably best for straight line filling, but experiment. Depending on the size of the gap, there may be some shrinkage, so you may have to use a second application. My experience with this method shows it takes primer, acrylic, and enamel paints well.

Again, this is a quick, easy, and inexpensive method for filling in those pesky seams along the wings and stabilizers and getting a nice fillet.

– Dale Hutchinson
Stafford, Va.

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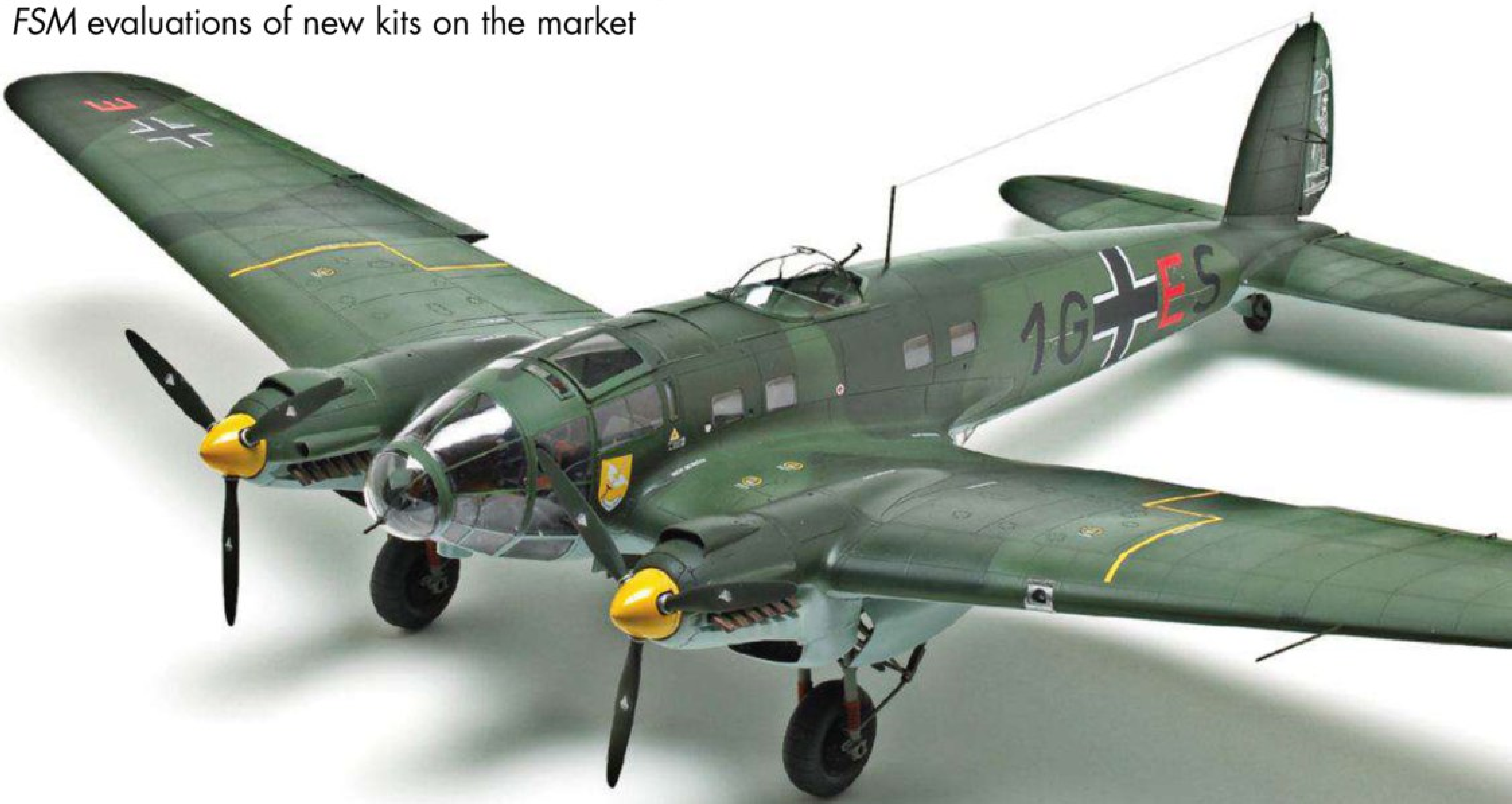
Workbench Reviews

FSM evaluations of new kits on the market



Supersized He 111 straightforward and

The distinctive profile of Heinkel's He 111 medium bomber made it one of the most recognizable aircraft in the World War II Luftwaffe. I have always liked the sleek lines of the 111, so I was pleased when Revell Germany announced an all-new tooling of the plane in 1/32 scale.

Molded in light blue styrene, the kit comprises 433 injection-molded parts; more than 40 of them are clear plastic, and these brilliant, thin parts are a highlight of the kit. I found the engraved panel lines were a little wide and deep for the scale, though. Prominent ejector-pin holes mar the sides of each cockpit fuselage half; I left them alone, as they would have been difficult to repair.

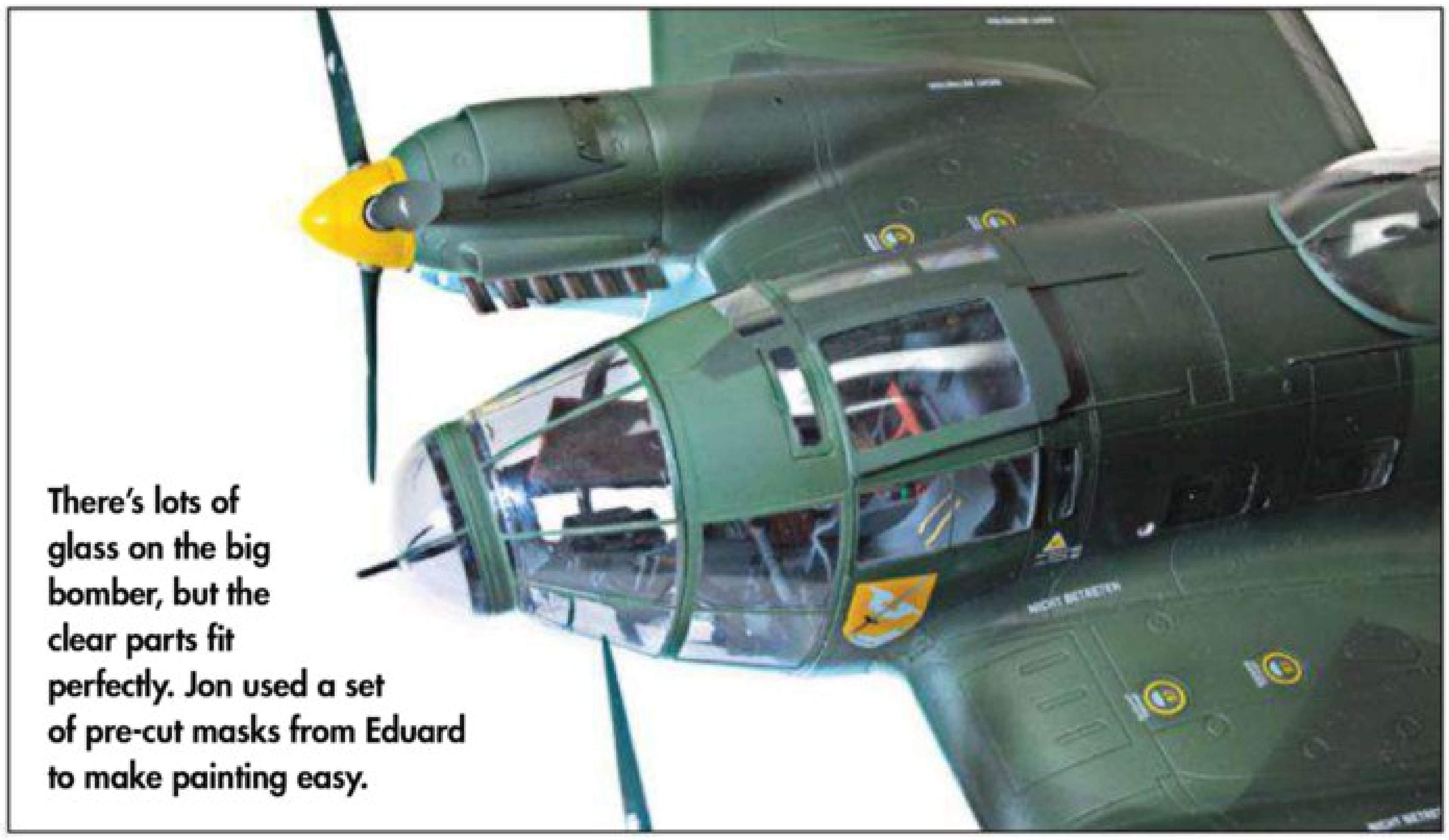
The cockpit is nicely detailed, a fine thing under that much glass. The pilot's control wheel, side consoles, and rudder pedals are satisfactory. Decals are provided for instrument faces.

Complete interiors fill the rest of the plane, too. The main landing gear and gear bays are nicely detailed, and the bomb bay has those unique, vertical bomb racks. The aft fuselage continues with radio gear and various ammo drum racks — and more ejector-pin marks on the fuselage walls.

Decals provide markings for three aircraft. The decals were in perfect register and had a dead-flat finish.

You have a few construction options, too. All the control surfaces are molded separately and are posable. Bomb bay doors can be opened or closed; same for the landing gear. The dorsal turret windscreen can be opened or closed; same goes for the cockpit hatch.

I found the 113 steps of the 16-page instruction booklet busy and, in places, hard to follow as parts placement was sometimes vague (mainly the ammo racks). As American modelers often note, paint references are for Revell colors. (You can find a cross-reference to Testors paints at http://downloads.hobbico.com/misc/rmx/TES_Revell_Paint_Match_Guide.pdf.)



There's lots of glass on the big bomber, but the clear parts fit perfectly. Jon used a set of pre-cut masks from Eduard to make painting easy.

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fun

Construction was straightforward, and everything fit perfectly.

The only issues I encountered were at steps 43 and 44: The instructions show attaching engine bulkhead parts 28 to the upper-center wing halves in a slot with raised lines. No such moldings existed on either parts, so I waited until later in the nacelle assembly to determine the exact placement for the bulkheads. My solution was to attach parts 32/33 and 20/21 to the completed center wing section, add the bulkhead parts 28, then attach the previously assembled engine nacelles.

Once the fuselage and wing center section were completed, it was time to begin masking all those clear parts for painting. Obviously, there's a lot of glazing. But Eduard comes to the rescue with a set of precut, self-adhesive masks made specifically for this kit (No. JX127). I was able to do all that masking in about an hour, even though there were a couple of odd omissions in the masks.

Mounting the tires on the main gear was tricky; I had to spread the landing gear legs to trap the tire. One side worked perfectly, but on the other side the main gear leg split down the middle and had to be repaired.

The overall fit of the big model was quite nice — especially all the clear parts! — and I used only a touch of filler here and there.

For the topside two-tone black green and dark green, I painted with Tamiya acrylics; underneath, I used decanted Tamiya spray paint. After the color coats were nice and dry, I used Tamiya clear straight from the spray can for a gloss coat to which I applied decals. The decals went on OK, though I did have to use some decal solvents to get them to settle into the panel lines. However, in spite of what looked like good adhesion on the gloss, I did have some silvering issues and ended up using Mr. Mark Softer on the troublemakers. Be careful with those solvents, though; it's easy to damage these thin decals. Once the decals were dry, I overcoated with Testors Dullcote.

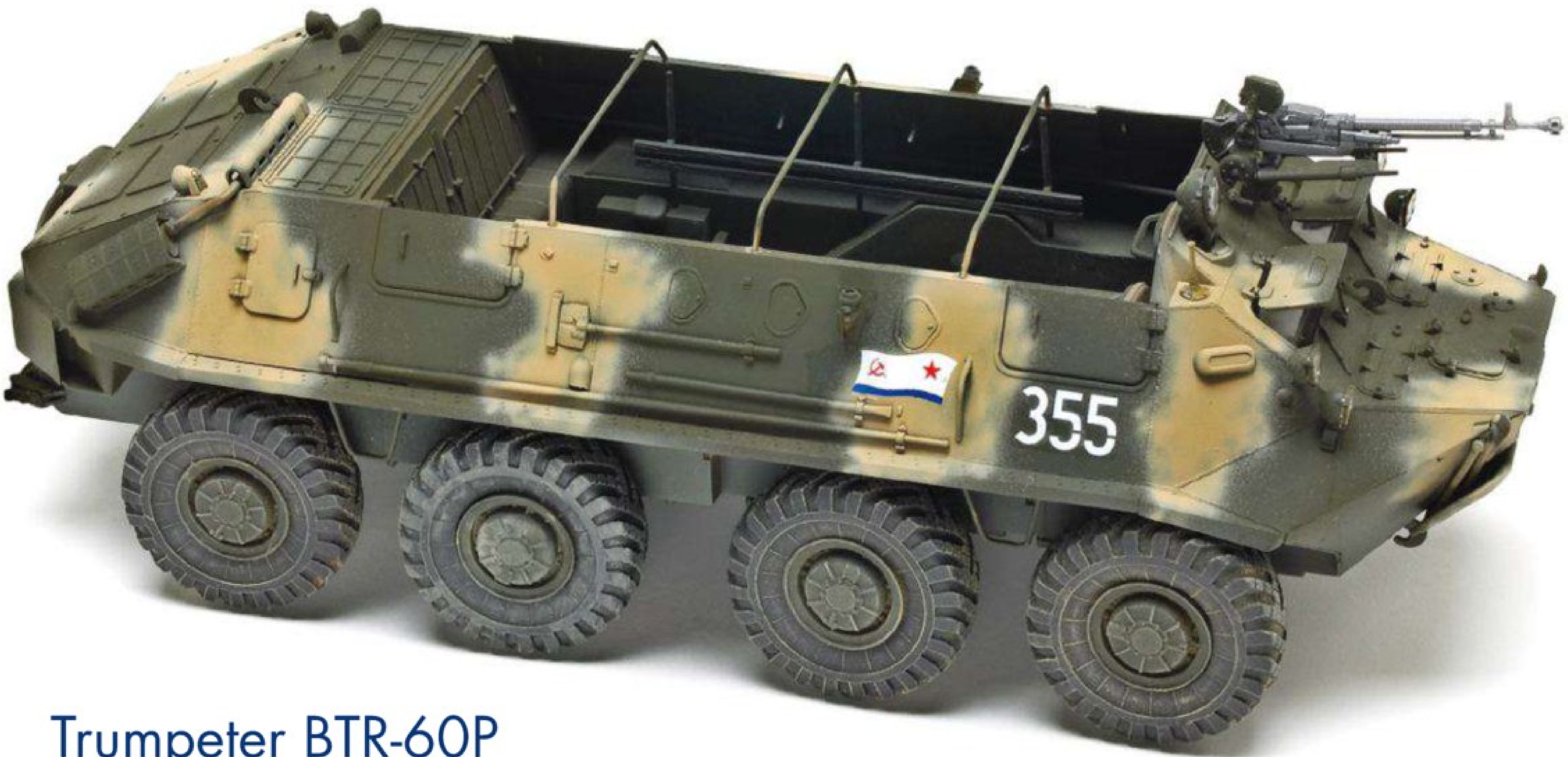
By law, Revell Germany kits provide no swastikas. I didn't have any spares, so my plane doesn't have them, either.

The completed model is striking — with a 27"-plus wingspan! It was an enjoyable build, thanks to the quality engineering and superb fit. I'm just not sure how or where to display it — it's too big for my display cases!

– Jon Hergenrother

Revell
1:32
Heinkel He 111 P-1
04696

Kit: No. 04696 **Scale:** 1/32
Manufacturer: Revell Germany, 49-05-223-965-0, www.revell.de **Price:** $117.50
Comments: Injection molded, 433 parts, decals **Pros:** Great cockpit detail; good fit; separate control surfaces; excellent decals; thin, brilliant clear parts **Cons:** Visible ejector-pin marks; lack of paint-color callouts; vague parts placements; fiddly landing gear; directions hard to follow



Trumpeter BTR-60P armored personnel carrier

This is the first of the eight-wheeled armored personnel vehicles produced by the Soviet Union. The open-topped model was soon replaced in the production line by a closed-top vehicle, and then by a turreted model.

Trumpeter's rendition of the BTR-60P has a detailed fighting compartment with poseable hatches, bench seats, and driver and commander stations.

Markings are included for three different vehicles — parade, regular army, and a naval version.

There were no fit issues through the eight steps of building the lower hull. The suspension is made of many small parts. Care needs to be taken in adding the driveshafts to the hull. They were brittle and easily fractured. Make sure you do not mix up the front and back axles; they have different angles.

No intake trunk is provided, but, for the most part, it is not seen.

I was impressed with the detail of the interior: radio sets, instrument panel, and driver's controls are all there. Also included is a decal for the instrument panel, which decal solvent helped settle into the uneven surface. I painted the interior benches separately, along with the hull interior.

When I test-fitted the upper and lower hulls without the interior, I found no fit issues. But with the interior in place, I had to clamp the top hull to the bottom. The vertical supports, parts V10, V13, and V11, do not reach the top of the hull.

The hull-top hardware went on without a hitch — and there is a lot of it. The gun ports can be posed open or closed. I left the prop covers open to show the inner detail. The headlight lenses were molded well, but their thickness reduces light transmission; you may want to use aftermarket headlights on yours. Also, the footholds, parts A12, were brittle.

I painted the 12.7mm DShK machine gun with Testors titanium before installing it. There were no 7.62mm SGMB machine guns provided.

The tires have a nicely molded chevron pattern. I sprayed them with Gunze clear flat before weathering them.

I did most of the painting with Tamiya olive drab (XF-62) and buff (XF-57), and I weathered with Tamiya pastels. In Steve Zaloga's book *Soviet Wheeled Armored Vehicles* (Concord, ISBN 978-962-361-013-1), I saw a photo of a naval infantry vehicle with very sloppy sand and spinach camouflage. After applying a similar scheme, I chose the markings for a naval infantry BTR and put the decals down over a gloss coat.

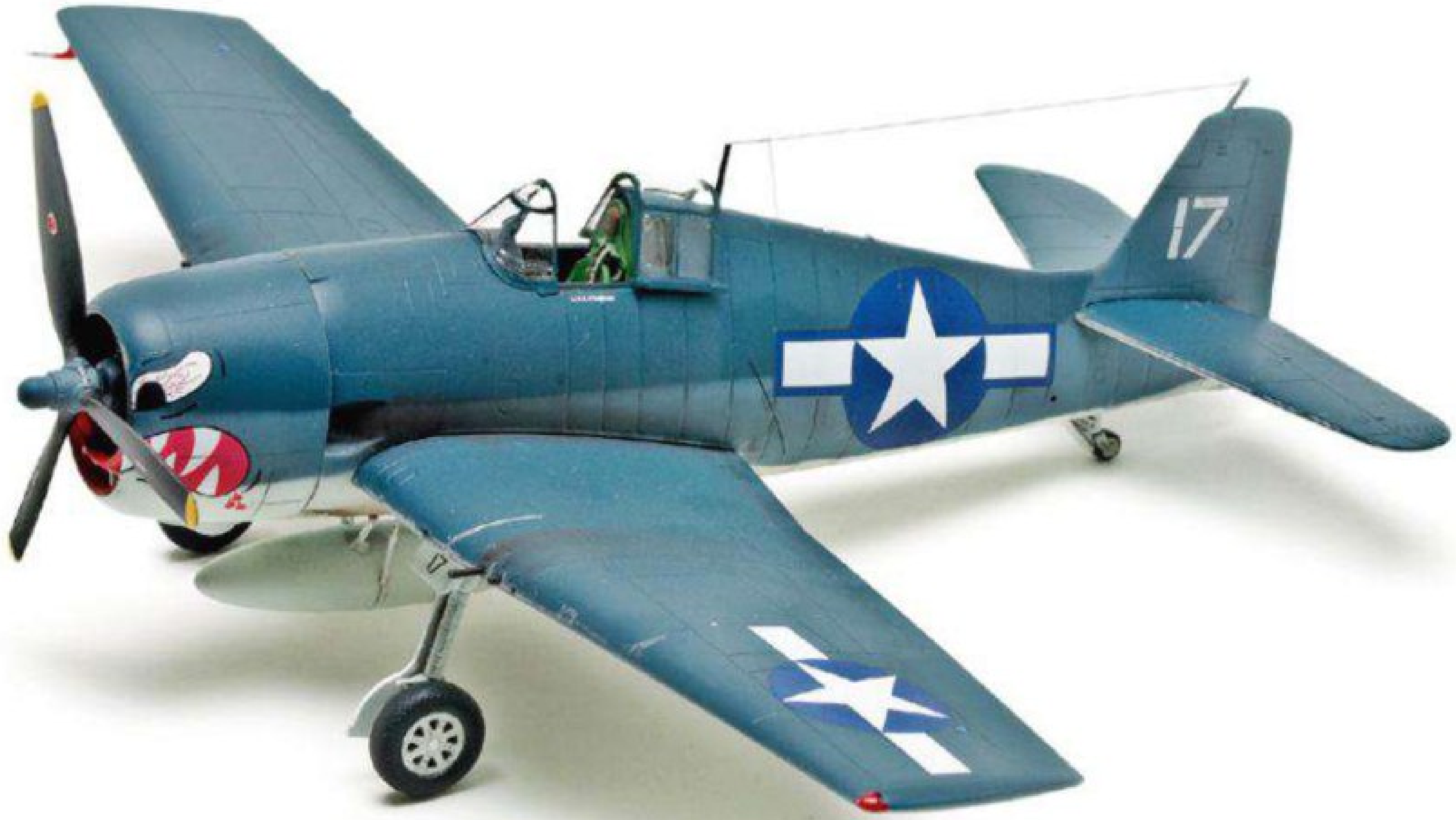
The model has a let's-get-loaded-up-and-go look, and I hope Trumpeter will bring out the more widely produced BTR-60PB. A lot of armies have used that vehicle, so there are a lot of interesting schemes out there.

I took me 22 hours to build this kit, but the tough fits make it one for experienced builders.

– Tom Foti

Russian BTR-60P APC

Kit: No. 01542 **Scale:** 1/35
Manufacturer: Trumpeter, www.trumpeter-china.com, from Stevens International, 856-435-1555, www.stevenshobby.com **Price:** $49.95
Comments: Injection molded, 424 parts (41 photoetched, 16 vinyl), decals
Pros: Good moldings; posable hatches; well detailed **Cons:** Brittle driveshafts; tiny, thick clear parts; minor fit issues; shallow intake trunk



Eduard Grumman F6F-3 Hellcat

Eduard follows its 1/48 scale Hellcat with a smaller sibling, and the result is a fine representation of the classic U.S. Navy World War II carrier-borne fighter. While not as complicated as the recent Cyber-hobby kit (see my review in the November 2011 *FSM*), Eduard's Hellcat has great detail where it can be seen.

Front and center are Eduard's hallmark features: precut self-adhesive canopy masks and prepainted photoetched-metal cockpit details. I had not used one of the masking sets before; it worked perfectly and was easy to do. The photoetched metal includes instrument panels, throttle quadrant, levers and handles, and seat harness. But as nice as these are, several parts are too fine to handle, even with sharp-pointed tweezers, and some of those little T handles and placards are too tiny to be seen with the naked eye, let alone installed; I left several of them on the fret. There is even a prepainted Pratt & Whitney eagle logo for the engine block that is 1mm in diameter. (I left it on the fret, too!) I didn't use the photoetched-metal ignition harness for the engine (but I was tempted).

I HAD TO SAND OFF A BIT OF PAINT BUT DIDN'T NEED TO USE GLUE TO INSTALL THE WINGS OR STABILIZERS

Once complete, though, the detailed interior is outstanding. It can be shown effectively, as Eduard provides opened or closed canopy parts. The open sliding portion is a bit wider than the closed one and is designed to fit over the turtle deck. Still, it is a tad too thick to sit correctly.

Eduard's plastic parts are finely molded, with subtle, recessed panel lines. The sprues hold several parts that look like they will be used on forthcoming F6F-5 and night-fighter Hellcats. A set of rockets and bombs (with photoetched-metal fins), and a centerline drop tank are provided.

I took advantage of the tight fit of the wings in the pockets molded into the fuselage and painted the assembled fuselage and wings separately. This backfired, though, as the thickness of the paint was enough to make the fit too tight. I had to sand off a bit of paint but still didn't need to use glue to install the wings or stabilizers. I like the separate one-piece wheels and one-piece tires for construction and painting.

I painted the model with Testors Model Master enamels; I found the flat sea blue was too dark and not blue enough, so I mixed it 1:1 with Testors Model Master blue FS35109.

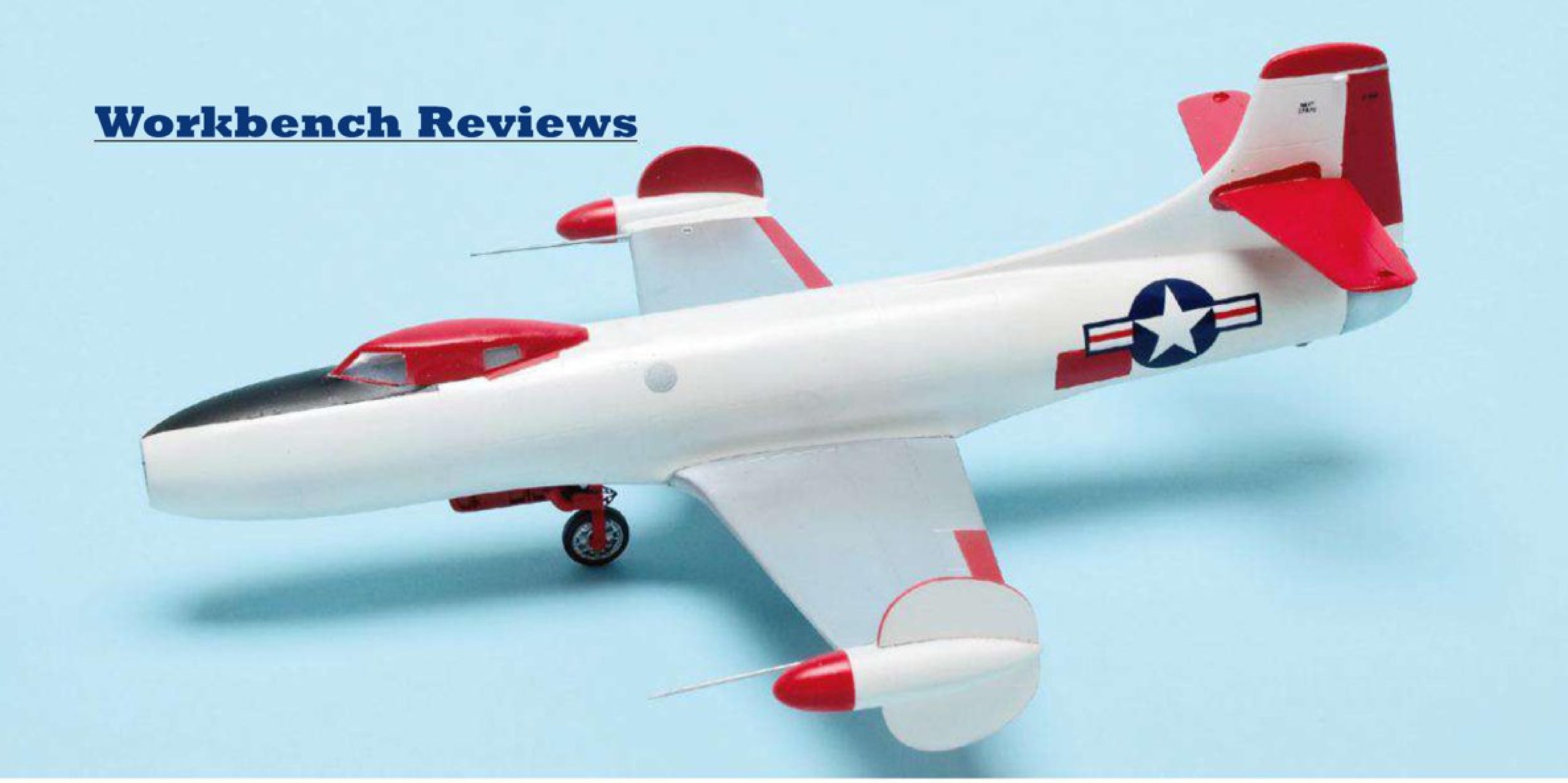
Eduard's Cartograf decals are superb, and I couldn't resist the snarling-cat-mouth markings of VF-27 on the ill-fated USS *Princeton*. Four other marking choices are provided.

After 23 hours, I had my Eduard Hellcat ready for display. To me it has the perfect combination of detail, accuracy, options, good fit, and great decals.

– Paul Boyer

F6F-3 Hellcat
ProfiPACK
19
1/72 scale
eduard

Kit: No. 7076 **Scale:** 1/72 **Manufacturer:** Eduard, 420-47-611-8259, www.eduard.cz **Price:** $24.95 **Comments:** Injection molded, 147 parts (69 photoetched), decals **Pros:** Beautiful exterior detailing; great photoetched-metal parts; great fit; good weapon options; excellent decals; canopy masks **Cons:** Some photoetched parts too small to handle; no folded-wing option



Special Hobby D-558-1 Skystreak "NACA"

The D-558-1 Skystreak was designed by Douglas Aircraft Company for the U.S. Navy and NACA (forerunner to NASA) to explore transonic and supersonic flight. The aircraft was initially painted red overall, but Special Hobby's box art, and my model, show it as it was painted later for better visibility.

Gray and clear plastic, photoetched-metal and cast-resin parts, as well as the decals, are packaged in clear plastic bags. A black-and-white, 12-page instruction booklet begins with a brief history in Czech and English. Included with the assembly drawings are a parts map, a color list for Gunze Sangyo paints, and four-view color and markings drawings for the three airframes built.

While part colors are called out on every page of the assembly drawings, parts are neither numbered nor named on the first page of drawings. The instrument-panel film (F) shown on the parts map was missing from my kit.

Plastic parts are crisply molded with finely scribed panel lines. Ejector-pin marks appear on the inside of many parts. Flash is minimal, but all part edges are rough and must be sanded to clean them up. The fuselage halves were slightly warped. Two canopies are provided; they have faint window outlines, and the cockpit openings do not fit the canopies. Horizontal stabilizers butt up against the vertical fin sides without locating pins or tabs.

The wing-to-fuselage fit requires considerable tweaking. The landing-gear wells, glued to the inside of the wing panels, interfere with the fuselage sides and must be trimmed.

The photoetched-metal safety harness and instrument panel are well done. Sadly, none of these parts is visible after the fuselage is joined and the canopy installed.

After cleanup and test-fitting, parts fit is generally good. I did have trouble installing resin part P7, the nose splitter/cockpit; it was oversize around the intake splitter, preventing the fuselage from being joined. I filed and sanded the top and bottom surfaces until it was located without stress. I lost Part P3 (nose-gear vibration damper, shown in Step 5) and replaced it with a stretched-sprue facsimile. During the build I broke the nose-gear strut (Part B15) four times.

AFTER CLEANUP ... FIT IS GENERALLY GOOD

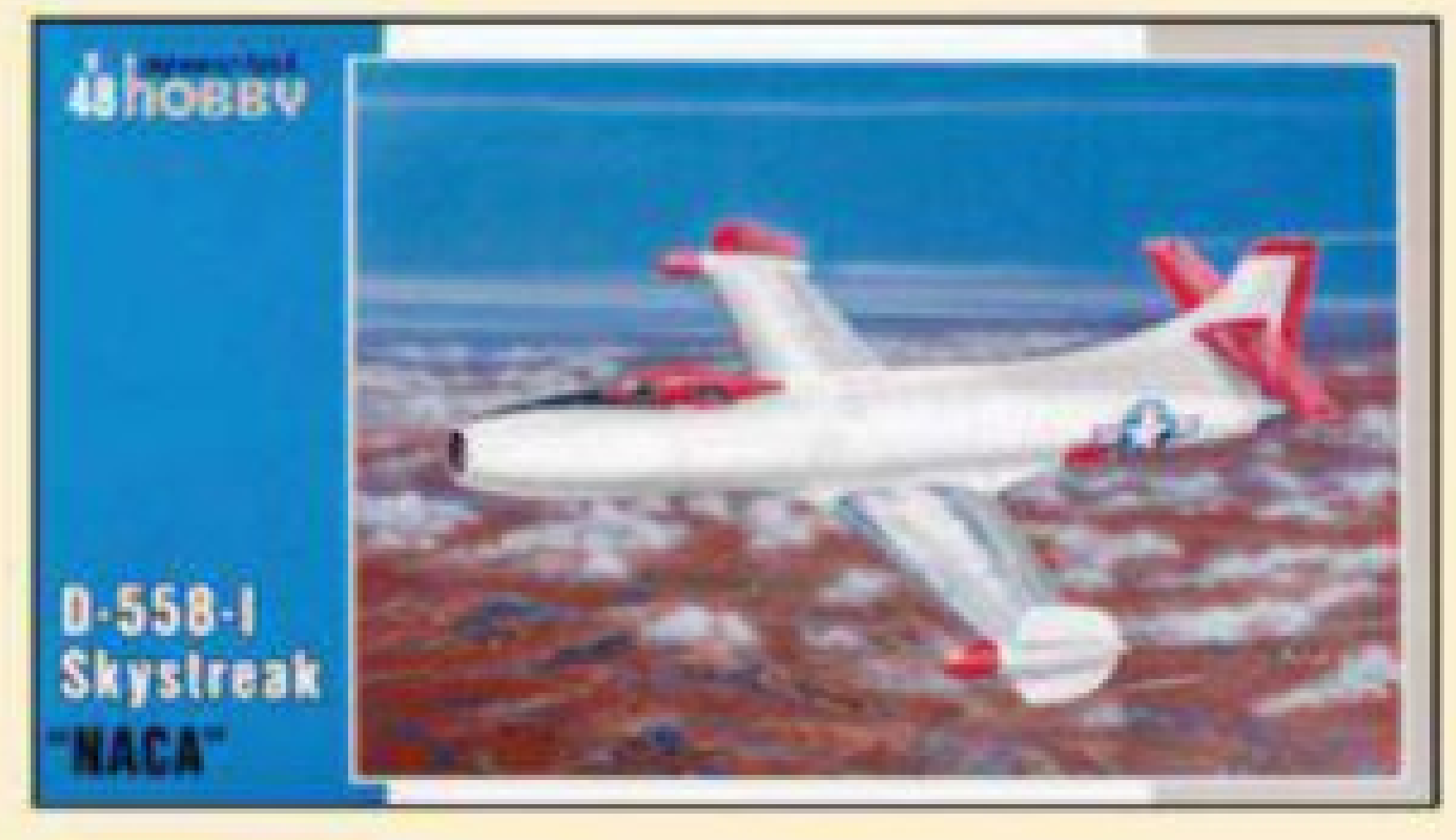
The wing-to-fuselage fit was rough. I was never able to get the wing far enough up on the fuselage sides to eliminate steps on the fuselage bottom at the leading and trailing edges.

I chose Floquil paints followed by Model Master clear gloss for decal application and final finish. The decals were fault-free and settled with just a little Micro Sol.

My crude measurements indicate the model is about 8 scale inches short in length. However, my references don't indicate whether or not the tip tanks were installed at the time of measurement.

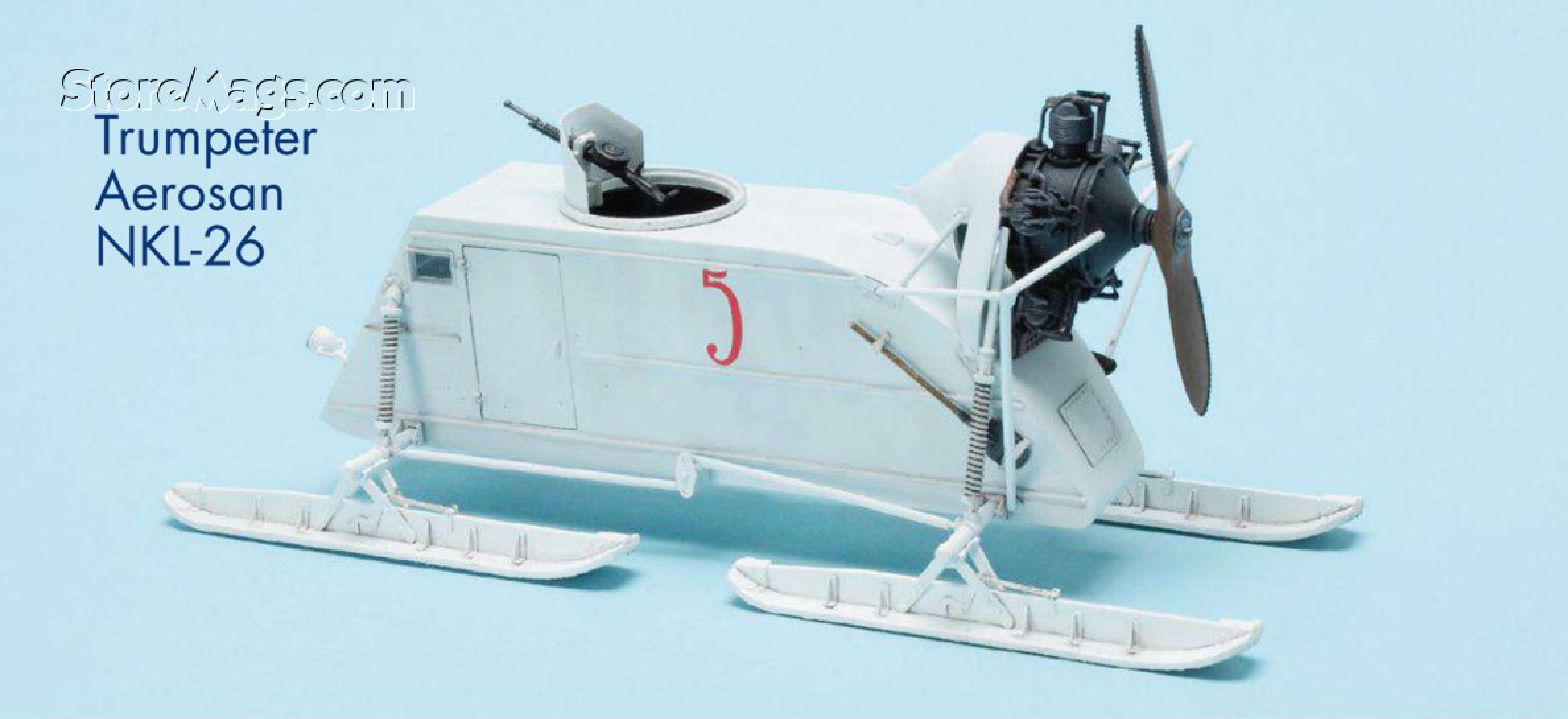
Photos in my prime reference, *Douglas D-558-1 Skystreak*, by Scott Libis (Ginter, ISBN 978-0-942612-56-1), show that the model's stance is about right. If you have experience in cobbling parts and applying white paint, Special Hobby's Skystreak will look great on your shelf. I know it's the only red-and-white jet in my collection.

– Allan F. Jones



Kit: No. SH48115 **Scale:** 1/48 **Manufacturer:** Special Hobby, www.mpmshop.eu, available from Sprue Brothers, www.spruebrothers.com **Price:** $48.95 **Comments:** Injection molded, 95 parts (14 photoetched, 11 resin, 1 film), decals **Pros:** Excellent decals **Cons:** Shallow engraved lines easily filled with paint; ill-fitting canopy; all parts require sanding and cleanup; many difficult fits; almost all photoetched-metal parts are hidden after canopy installation

Trumpeter Aerosan NKL-26



The Aerosan was a propeller-driven sled with an aircraft engine mounted on a plywood body, a steel plate on the front for armor, and an armored driver's visor.

Trumpeter's version of the NKL-26 comes in light gray styrene with two photoetched-metal frets and a clear sheet for three windows. The moldings have minor flash and mold lines but are easy to clean up. The roof and front plate are added to a central tub for the body; the fits are good and require no filler. A basic interior is included, lacking only an accelerator, front and rear brake pedals, and a set of pulleys for the steering cables. Useful diagrams are found in *Aerosan: Soviet Aero-Sleighs of World War Two*, by Jim Kinnear (Tankograd Soviet Special No. 2010).

I filled knock-out marks on the floor and roof interior with styrene disks or super glue, depending on the depth, then filed them smooth. Then the interior went quickly in the first two steps. The door has a handle on the outside but needs one inside if you're going to leave it open. I would have preferred decals to the molded gauges on the dashboard.

I left the windows off until painting; the front glass needed trimming to fit. Mounting clamps are molded to the shovel, but you can shave them off and use photoetched-metal parts. I kept the molded mounts, which seemed to have better detail, but I replaced the gray styrene headlight with a clear lens from my spares. A photoetched-metal strip with all the rivet detail is glued to the turret; it is about 1mm too long and needs trimming. (I found this out after I had the whole thing glued together.)

Most of the photoetched metal is for the skis, each with 10 braces; a folding tool makes this easier. I needed a little filler for a gap on the end of the skis where parts C4 and C3 meet. I attached the skis at the end of the build.

The kit's gem is its detailed radial engine, a three-piece core to which all the smaller parts are added. I lightly sanded core parts D10, D11, and D12 to get a good seal. I glued parts B3 (cylinders) to the engine core before gluing parts B2 and B13 (lines) to B3, rather than attaching the lines first as in the instructions. Gluing Part D25 helps show proper placement of other parts glued to B3. The generator belt is another piece of photoetched metal. I left off the completed engine to paint it separately.

Instructions are unclear regarding options for the front of the engine: Step 8 calls for one option, Step 9 shows a second. I chose the latter, because I couldn't find any pictures of the former. If you do choose the latter, then you do not use parts E27 and E29 as shown in Step 4. In the second option, there should be a vent cap for the fuel tank. But none is provided.

You can paint your Aerosan any color as long as it's white; I used Tamiya flat white (XF-2), mixing in a few drops of Tamiya light gray (XF-66) for contrast and weathering. Trumpeter includes a color guide for detail painting. I painted the props Tamiya khaki (XF-49); when that had dried, I streaked burnt umber artist's oil paint on the propeller, then dragged a flat brush lengthwise to replicate wood grain. I painted other details with Humbrol and Vallejo colors. The weathering was completed with Vallejo black and pale gray washes.

Decals provide two options for markings — both are shown with the first engine option — but pictures in the Tankograd book show any kind of marking was rare.

A figure is included, wearing a greatcoat and a tanker's helmet and posed to fire the machine gun. The fit of the figure's parts is poor, requiring sanding and filler, and I was unable to position the trigger arm (surgery would be required). Fully assembled, the figure is too big to fit in the turret ring.

Internet sources have claimed various inaccuracies in the kit, but it still builds into an impressive little model (especially with that engine). Don't let the small box fool you; this is no weekend lark. It took me 21 hours to finish; the engine alone makes this a better project for experienced modelers.

– Mike Scharf

Soviet Armoured Aerosan NKL-26

Kit: No. 02321 **Scale:** 1/35 **Manufacturer:** Trumpeter, www.trumpeter-china.com, from Stevens International, 856-435-1555, www.stevenshobby.com **Price:** $35.95 **Comments:** Injection molded, 231 parts (73 photoetched), decals **Pros:** Interior, engine detail; easy-to-use photoetched metal **Cons:** Some accuracy issues; vague construction options; poorly designed, out-of-scale figure

Zvezda HMS *Dreadnought*

HMS *Dreadnought* was the first of a revolutionary type of battleship that would come to bear her name. New theories of design made older types obsolete overnight, starting a new arms race that would see nations throughout the world scramble to build the best ship.

Zvezda's new *Dreadnought* is an excellent kit, crisply molded in light gray and clear plastic that is remarkably free of flash. The plastic is a little soft, but that makes trimming and cleaning up the multitude of thin parts easy.

You get the option of a full-hull or waterline model. The bridge face and cabins are molded in clear plastic. Oddly, there are no jack staffs.

Masts and yards are molded together, but not in the normal fashion. Instead of a simple intersection, the yards are raised away from the mast like the real thing. The anchor chains are separate, which produces a nice three-dimensional look.

The small parts are molded as well as can be expected for an injection-molded kit. Many of the parts have alignment pins that are keyed so they fit only one way. This was a great help while assembling the kit.

The instructions are well drawn, simple, and logical. Having finished the kit, I would suggest one change: When you are through with Step 15, attach and align Part B23 (bridge deck and wings) to the kit, then continue with the construction of the bridge (steps 16–18). I knocked a number of the small parts off during these steps.

I did need to use a small amount of putty to fair in the rudder posts, and also parts B4 and B5, to the main hull. Nevertheless, the overall fit was above average.

The painting guide is nice, but you will have to look at the box's side panels for some of the colors. The guide references Testors Model Master paints. I used Floquil railroad SP lettering gray, SP skylark gray, zinc chromate primer, and engine black. The deck is painted with White Ensign teak.

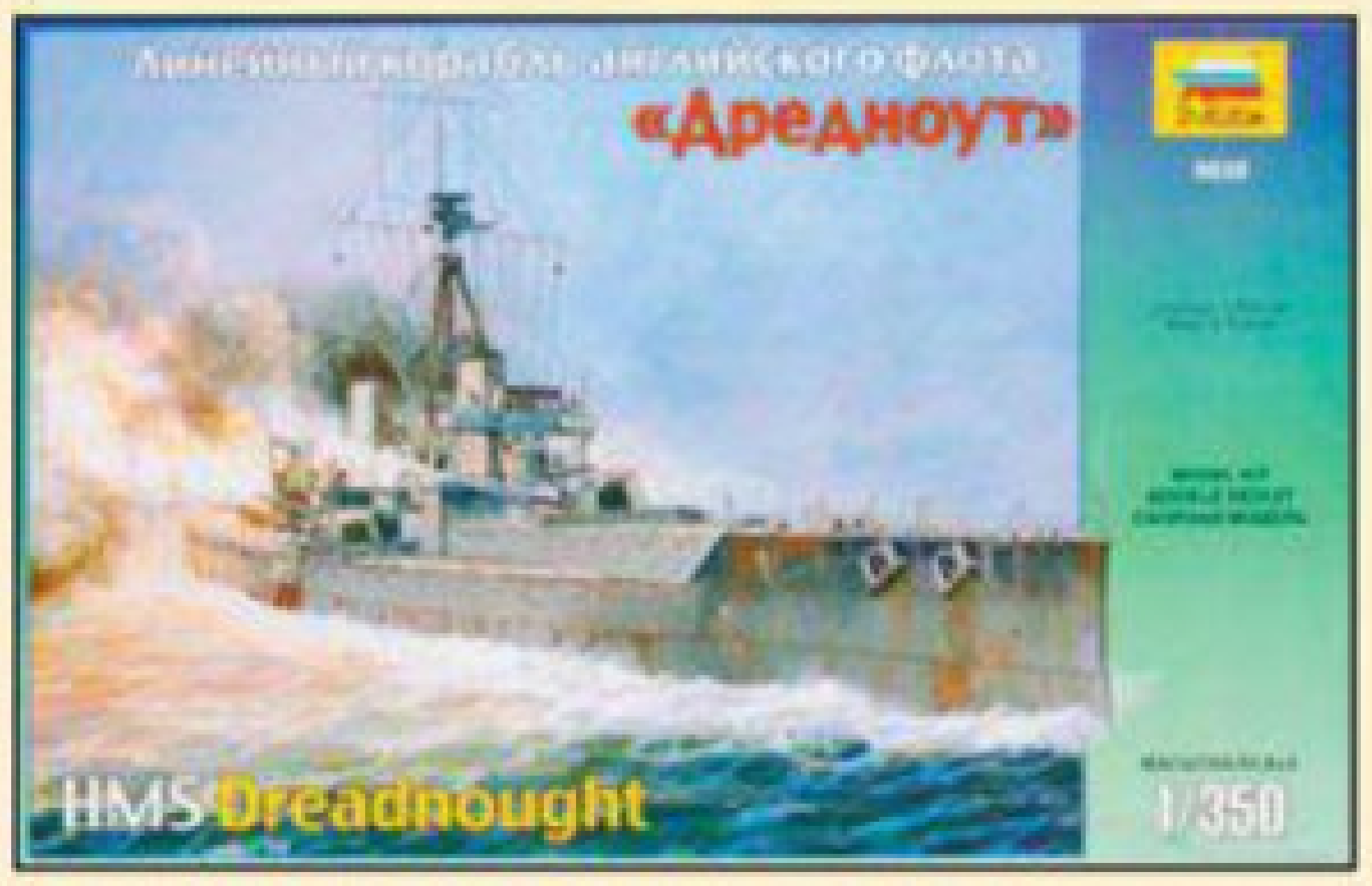
The decals provided a simple black name, DREADNOUGHT. However, the colors should be brass. There was no carrier film attaching the letters — it was surprising to see all the individual letters floating in the water! I recommend sealing the sheet with liquid decal film before application.

According to my reference, *Anatomy of the Ship: The Battleship* Dreadnought, by John Roberts (Conway Maritime Press, ISBN 978-1-55750-057-1), the kit measurements are correct.

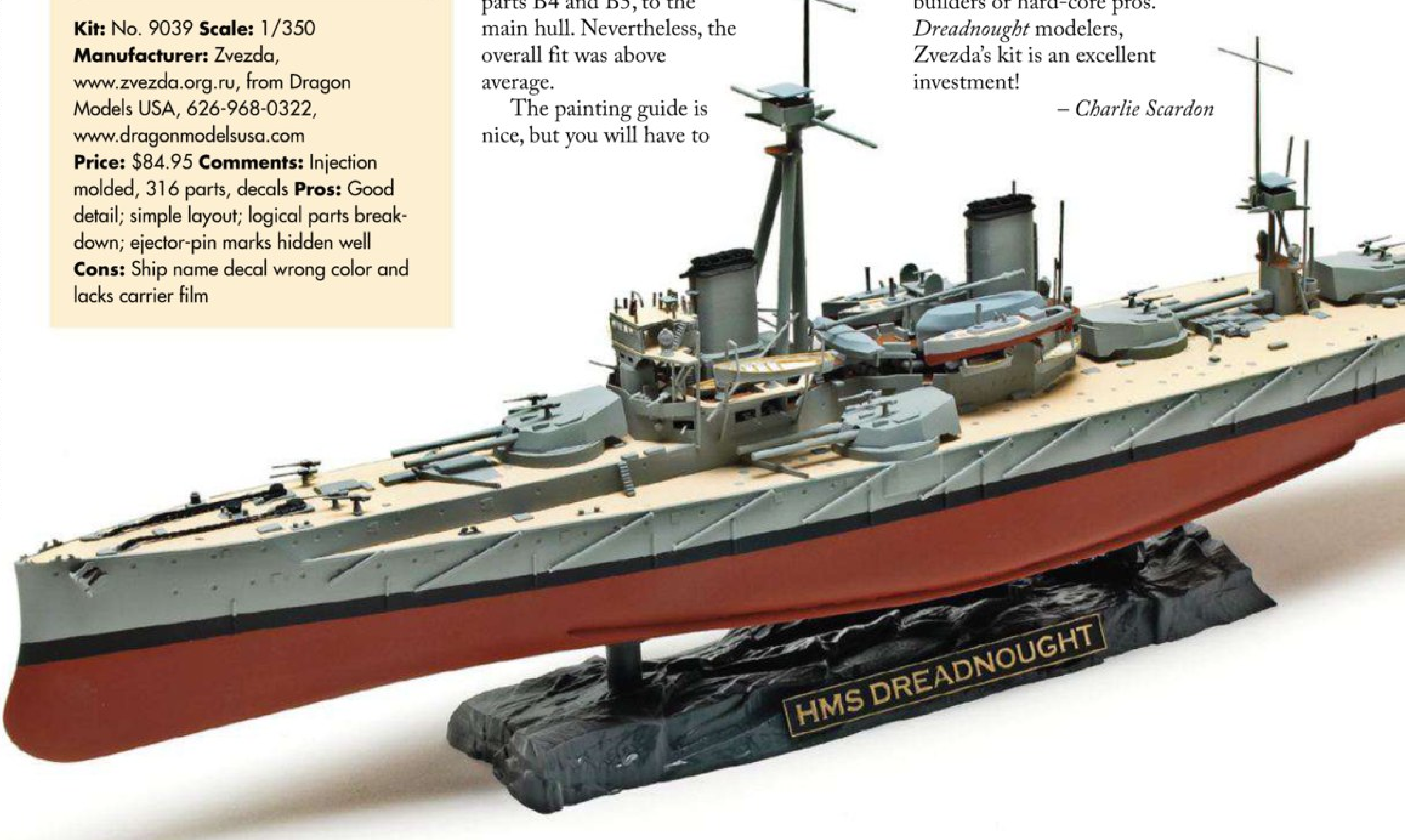
I spent only 20 hours building the kit; cleanup is just that easy, and the fit is that good. I could see no errors in the parts. If I were to build it again, I would spend more time and invest in a set of photoetched metal.

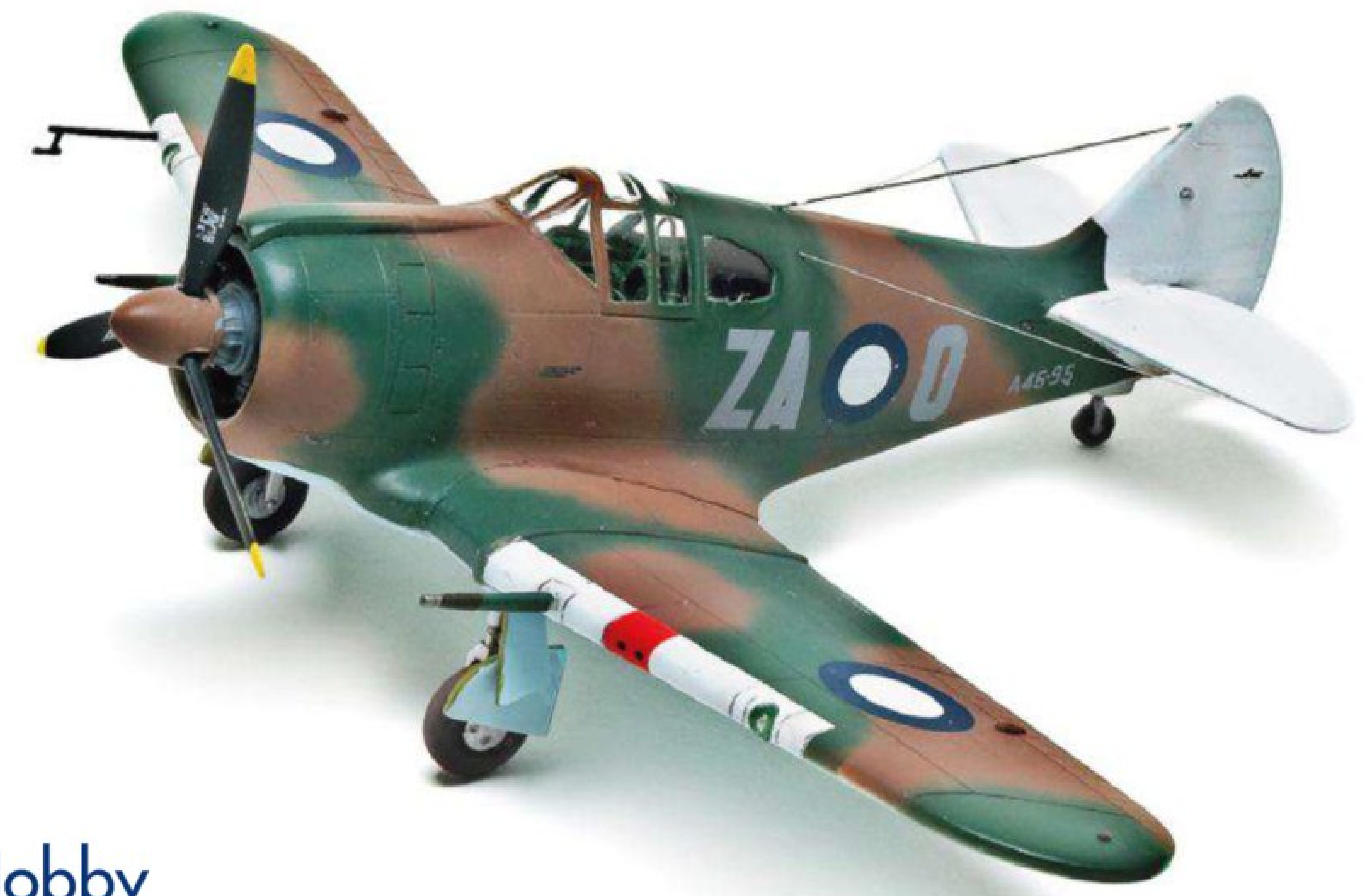
This is a great build for either beginning builders or hard-core pros. *Dreadnought* modelers, Zvezda's kit is an excellent investment!

– Charlie Scardon



Kit: No. 9039 **Scale:** 1/350
Manufacturer: Zvezda, www.zvezda.org.ru, from Dragon Models USA, 626-968-0322, www.dragonmodelsusa.com
Price: $84.95 **Comments:** Injection molded, 316 parts, decals **Pros:** Good detail; simple layout; logical parts breakdown; ejector-pin marks hidden well
Cons: Ship name decal wrong color and lacks carrier film





Special Hobby CAC CA-12 Boomerang

With its supply routes threatened by Japanese expansion in the Pacific during World War II, Australia saw the need to develop its own fighter aircraft. The result was the CA-12 Boomerang. Powered by a copy of the 1,200 horsepower Pratt & Whitney Twin Wasp engine, it was a maneuverable and pugnacious-looking fighter.

Special Hobby released a 1/72 kit of this aircraft, previously kitted only by Airfix many years ago. Sporting recessed panel lines, fine surface detail, and a great-looking decal sheet offering four options for markings, this kit looked promising on the sprue. But there was a lot of work ahead.

HEAVY SANDING PRODUCED A SNUG JOINT.

Dry-fitting all the pieces and subassemblies is essential. The cockpit, though extensively detailed, doesn't easily fit into the fuselage without a lot of sanding and scraping. Parts 42 and 43 hinder the fit of the cockpit framework, which also sits a little too far forward in the fuselage. Once installed, this assembly impedes the fit of the lower wing to the fuselage. Only heavy sanding produced a snug joint. I had to glue and clamp the wing to the fuselage one small section at a time, letting it cure overnight to get it situated. Even with this procedure, the seam between the upper left wing and fuselage popped open later while I was applying the decals.

Another area to watch out for is the canopy. On my sample, the rear of Part CP1 was wider than the fuselage. I initially missed this detail and wound up using filler to blend it in. A much better alternative would be a shim between the rear top fuselage halves behind the canopy.

I couldn't get the clear landing-light lenses to fit the wings, so I opted to fill the cavities on the leading edges with 5-minute epoxy; that turned out just fine.

Painting instructions are given in Gunze Sangyo colors, some of which I didn't have, so I tried to match them to Tamiya paints. Polly Scale has WWII Royal Australian Air Force colors in its line.

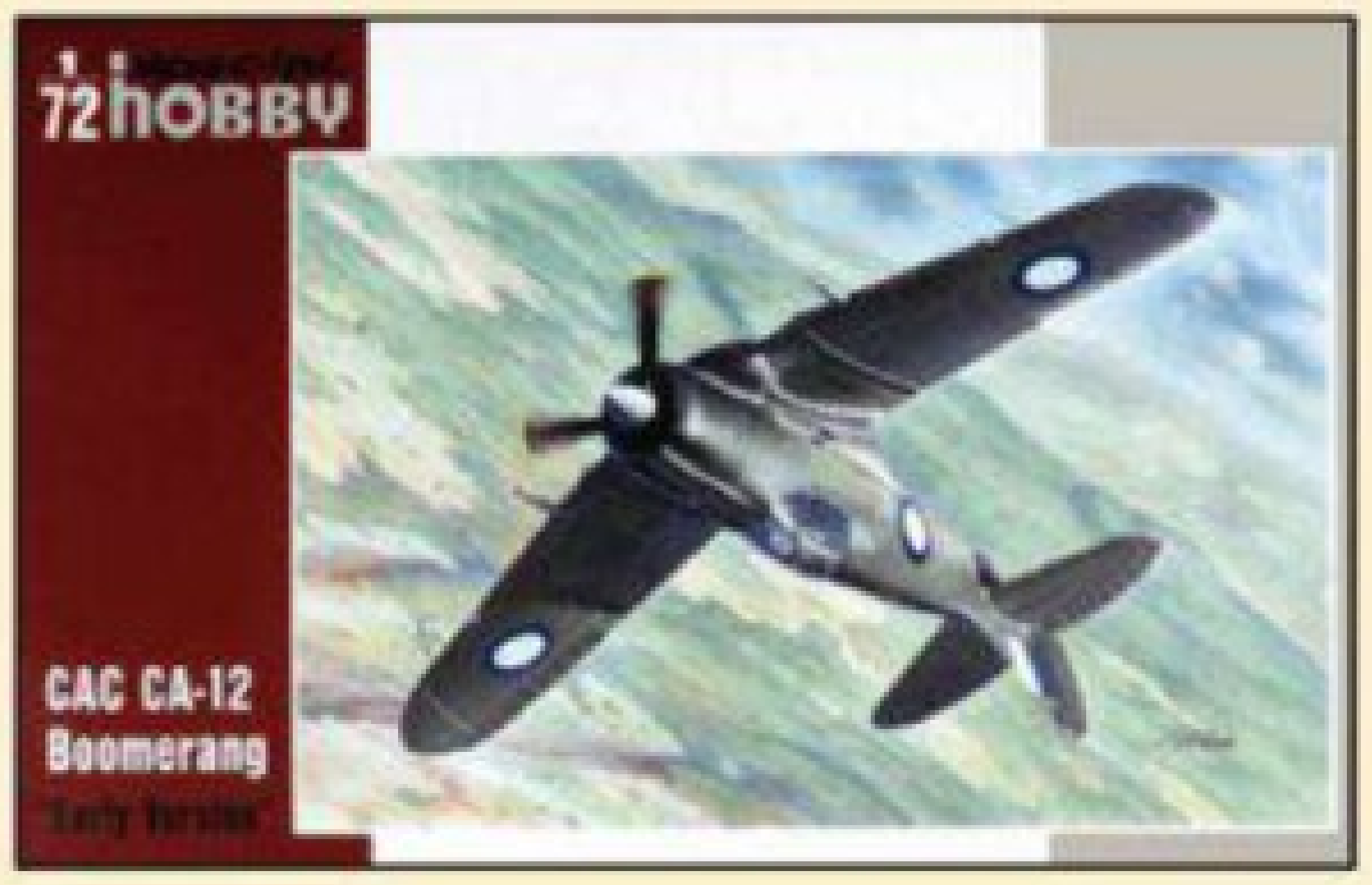
The extensive decal sheet has codes for four different aircraft and a ton of stencil data. Unfortunately, other than roundels and codes, there is no guide to placing all that stuff. I only used a fraction of the stencils available.

The larger decals settled nicely without any setting solution, but the smaller ones were fragile and difficult to move once they were on the model. I had some silvering on the serial numbers, but I probably didn't get enough gloss coating on the area under the horizontal stabilizers.

The fit issues with this model make it a demanding build. Many of the 30 hours I spent on it were a challenge. So, mate, be forewarned about some of this kit's difficulties. However, if you have a little experience and a lot of patience, you can overcome those problems and add a neat, little replica of the Boomerang to your collection.

The model scales out almost dead-on, within ⅛" of published dimensions, and you'll get a lot of satisfaction from the finished product.

– Phil Pignataro



Kit: No. SH72044 **Scale:** 1/72 **Manufacturer:** Special Hobby, www.mpmshop.eu, available from MidTenn Hobbies, www.midtennhobbies.com **Price:** $25 **Comments:** Injection molded, 58 parts, decals **Pros:** Fine surface detail, nice decal sheet **Cons:** Poor fit of main components and clear parts, no guidance for stencil placements

Vulcan British light tank Mk.VIB

When Great Britain entered World War II, there were more Vickers-Armstrongs Mk.VI light tanks than any other type of tank in the British inventory. The Mk.VIs saw frontline service until 1942, and were even used by Egypt in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

Vulcan Scale Models scores a first with its 1/35 scale injection-molded kit of the Mk.VI. In dark gray plastic, the kit features excellent surface detail, a small sheet of photoetched-metal parts, and injection-molded link-and-length tracks. Markings are provided for two vehicles. The black-and-white instructions use exploded diagrams to show parts placement, but at times the drawings are busy and the parts' locations vague. Five-view diagrams are supplied for painting, but the second vehicle does not have its camouflage pattern displayed in the top view.

Assembly starts with the main hull. With only a driver's seat inside, I glued all my hatches shut. I wish I would have installed the driver's hatches before adding the top deck (Part C18); it was difficult to get parts C3 and C25 in position with the deck in place. I added a small piece of plastic strip to provide a ledge for the two hatches.

Assembling the bogies takes a lot of care and attention to the diagrams. First, I sorted the springs and shafts into long and short piles. I found if I drilled the centers of the castle nuts (B3) with a No. 72 drill bit before removing them from the sprue, they fit snugly on the shafts. If you get it right, you will be rewarded with suspension units that actually work (though the springs provided are very stiff). I left the bogies and tracks off until I had painted the main camouflage.

While some of the photoetched-metal parts are also available in plastic, the photoetched metal looks more to-scale. Some parts, such as the driver's hatch stops, the handles for the searchlight, the license-plate bracket, and the blade sight for the turret, are photoetched metal only; you'll need some skill at bending. The most difficult pieces are the headlight boxes, but they look so much better than the injection-molded parts that it is worth the extra effort.

I mixed Tamiya acrylics according to formulas provided in the instructions. To get the hard-edge camouflage pattern, I hand-brushed the separation lines, then filled them in with the airbrush. I applied decals over a coat of Pledge Future floor polish; the decals looked a little thick on the sheet, but I found they responded well to Micro Sol. And after a coat of flat clear, they looked great.

The most difficult part of the model was installing the tracks. I had to trim the bogie-unit attachments slightly to get them to sit properly. The drive-sprocket attachment point is weak; were I to build another kit, I would modify it for a more-solid attachment. Trying to get all the track and suspension pieces to fit was a real juggling act, as nothing can be set solid until all is in place. The tracks do fit well, but they are a challenge.

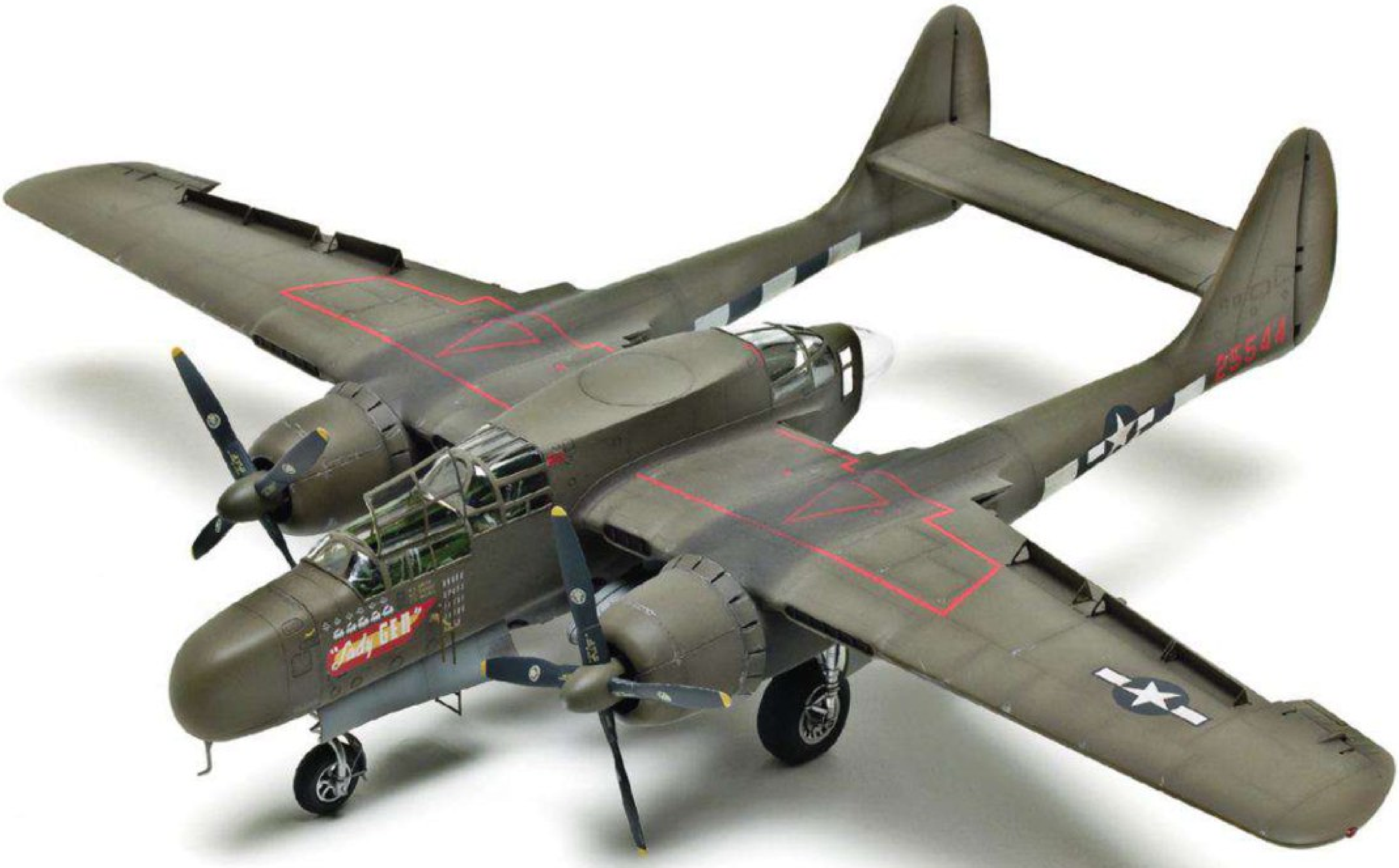
I spent about 26 hours building my Mark VI, a little longer than normal due to the paint scheme, photoetched metal, and track installation. The finished model matched published dimensions.

This tiny tank had several variants, including use as a self-propelled gun and anti-aircraft vehicle. I hope Vulcan treats us to some of these, too. I would only recommend this kit to experienced modelers, but it is a lot of kit for the price.

– John Plzak

BRITISH
LIGHT TANK
MARK VI B
VULCAN
Scale 1:35
Item No. 56008
© VULCAN 2011

Kit: No. 56008 **Scale:** 1/35 **Manufacturer:** Vulcan Scale Models, www.vulcanmodels.com, from Stevens International, 856-435-1555, www.stevenshobby.com **Price:** $49.95 **Comments:** Injection molded, 288 parts (60 photoetched metal, 40 white-metal), decals **Pros:** Effective use of photoetched metal; good surface detail; nice lenses for the lights **Cons:** Fiddly running gear with difficult tracks; lack of photoetched-metal options for some parts; instructions vague in places



Great Wall Hobby Northrop P-61A Black Widow

Many modelers know Monogram's 1/48 scale Northrop P-61 Black Widow — a kit with wide appeal that has been equally as famous for its difficulty. It's been a long wait, but now Great Wall Hobby has released the first P-61 in this scale since Monogram first kitted the late-war night fighter in 1974.

The model is molded in medium gray plastic on 14 sprues and looks fine at first glance. You also get one fret of photoetched metal with delicate details (sometimes too delicate) and a choice of two sets of markings: One is *Lady Gen* in the European theater; the other is *Sweatin' Wally* from the China-Burma-India theater, 1944.

Among the options are positionable gun-bay doors underneath the fuselage — it looks like they fit snugly enough to be pressed into place if you want the doors closed — and movable and positionable control surfaces.

Although the instructions' steps are not numbered, assembly is straightforward. The build begins with the seats in the cockpit. Instructions indicate two pilot seats and one radar operator's seat; in fact, it should be the other way around. The photoetched-metal seat belts and harnesses are nice, but they're delicate, fragile, multipiece assemblies that require special care.

Also included are decals for instrument dials and data plates; nice thoughts, but difficult to apply. The instruments won't fit properly into the molded dial faces unless you punch each of them out; I didn't have that kind of time for review, so I just painted the panel black and dry-brushed it. The data plates would go on the ledge of the cockpit side walls, but that surface isn't wide enough and the decals weren't flexible enough to attach, so I applied them just below the ledge.

The instructions would have you install the forward boarding ladder next. But if you want to display it extended, I would suggest leaving it off until after paint and decals. Just nip the pivot pins off the assembly and slide it into place later.

The fuselage halves are supposed to trap the nose-gear assembly when joined, but I waited and snapped it in after gluing the halves.

The plastic didn't seem receptive to liquid cement, though, and I had to clamp the fuselage all the way around and let it dry overnight.

If you want the model to balance, you will have to load the nose with 2 ounces of weight.

The clear parts for the forward cockpit and rear radar operator's station all fit nicely. They sit a little proud, but not enough to take away from the model. Parts J4 and J5 should be glued permanently in place; these were escape panels.

I masked all the clear parts and glued before painting. I tacked the upper, opening piece of the forward cockpit, Part J3, because I wanted to pose it open. You will have to file a flat on the edge of Part J3 to provide a gluing surface for the left side.

Next, the wings and booms: The wings, ailerons, and flap assembly goes together nicely. But I don't understand the recessed area for the speed brakes. The photoetched-metal brakes can be posed opened or closed. If you choose closed, you need to trim the extension arms off and glue the remaining portions in the provided recess — or, at least, that's what the instructions say. In reality, the speed brakes retracted down and back into the wings, not down and forward onto the wing as depicted.

The booms go together without a hitch. Again, you're supposed to trap the landing

Continued on page 62

Getting the right nose: The first set of kits arrived with the P-61B's long nose, wrong for the early A. Modelers with the incorrect nose should contact Dragon Models USA, 626-968-0322, or go open a ticket at www.dragoncare.com.

Workbench Reviews

Continued from page 61

gear. And, again, it can be left off and snapped into place, then glued, after painting and decaling.

The engines are nice, but there are a few problems. First, there are no magnetos provided. Second, the photoetched-metal ignition harness is delicate. You've got about one chance to bend and locate the leads to the proper cylinders or they may snap off. I lost a few.

On the cowling parts (I29), the front openings are too small. They need to be opened up a little. The props and spinners are molded as one piece, which leaves an open notch behind the prop blades. It would have been better to have a back plate for the spinners to close the gaps.

The booms go on nicely, just a little filler on top where the wing meets. The boom/wing assemblies mate up with the fuselage with no gaps. Don't forget the horizontal stabilizer between the booms; don't glue it right away, just trap it between the booms. After the wing-to-fuselage assemblies dry, pull everything tight and glue the stabilizer and booms. No filler is needed.

You get two fuel tanks, but there are four slots, two on each wing: one inside and one outside of the booms to mount the fuel tanks. Check your references to see where the tanks should go. I mounted mine in the inner slots.

The rear hatch/boarding ladder is a nice little unit with photoetched-metal framing and .015" styrene-rod strips.

L4802 NORTHROP P-61A 'BLACK WIDOW'

Kit: No. L4802 **Scale:** 1/48
Manufacturer: Great Wall Hobby, www.lionroar.net, from Dragon Models USA, 626-968-0322, www.dragonmodelsusa.com
Price: $89.95 **Comments:** Injection molded, 206 parts (33 photoetched metal), decals **Pros:** Generally good fits; nice detail **Cons:** Some shortcomings in design: cowl openings too small; exhausts can't be used if you're using closed cowl flaps; clear radome must be painted over to hide nose weights

Decals went down OK but were a little thick. They had a flat finish, which always makes me leery, but were not a problem.

It took me about 33 hours to complete my P-61. No special tricks; just follow the instructions carefully. Aside from the few engineering issues, it's a big improvement over the Monogram kit. A few years of modeling experience also helps.

– Larry Schramm

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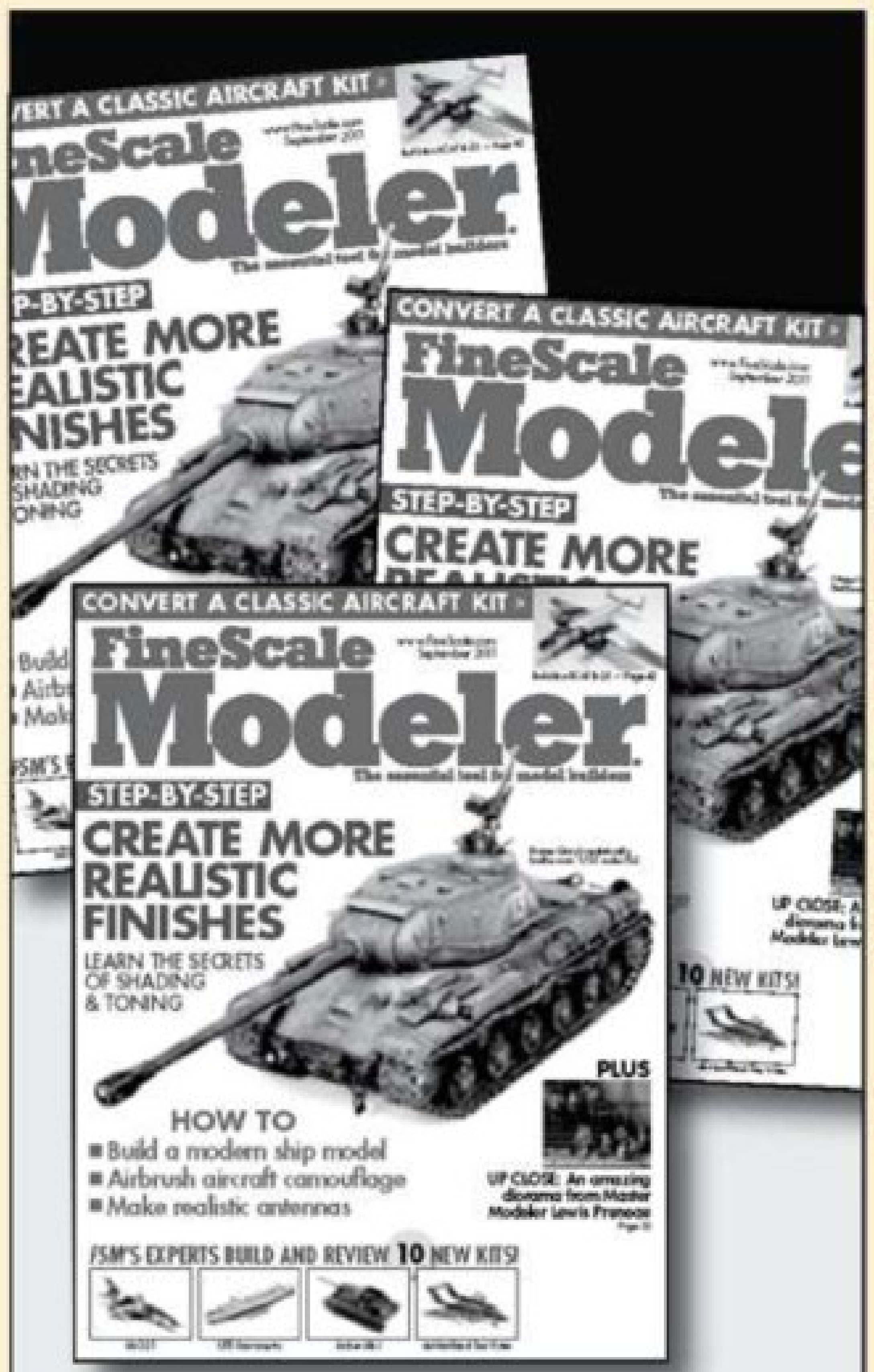

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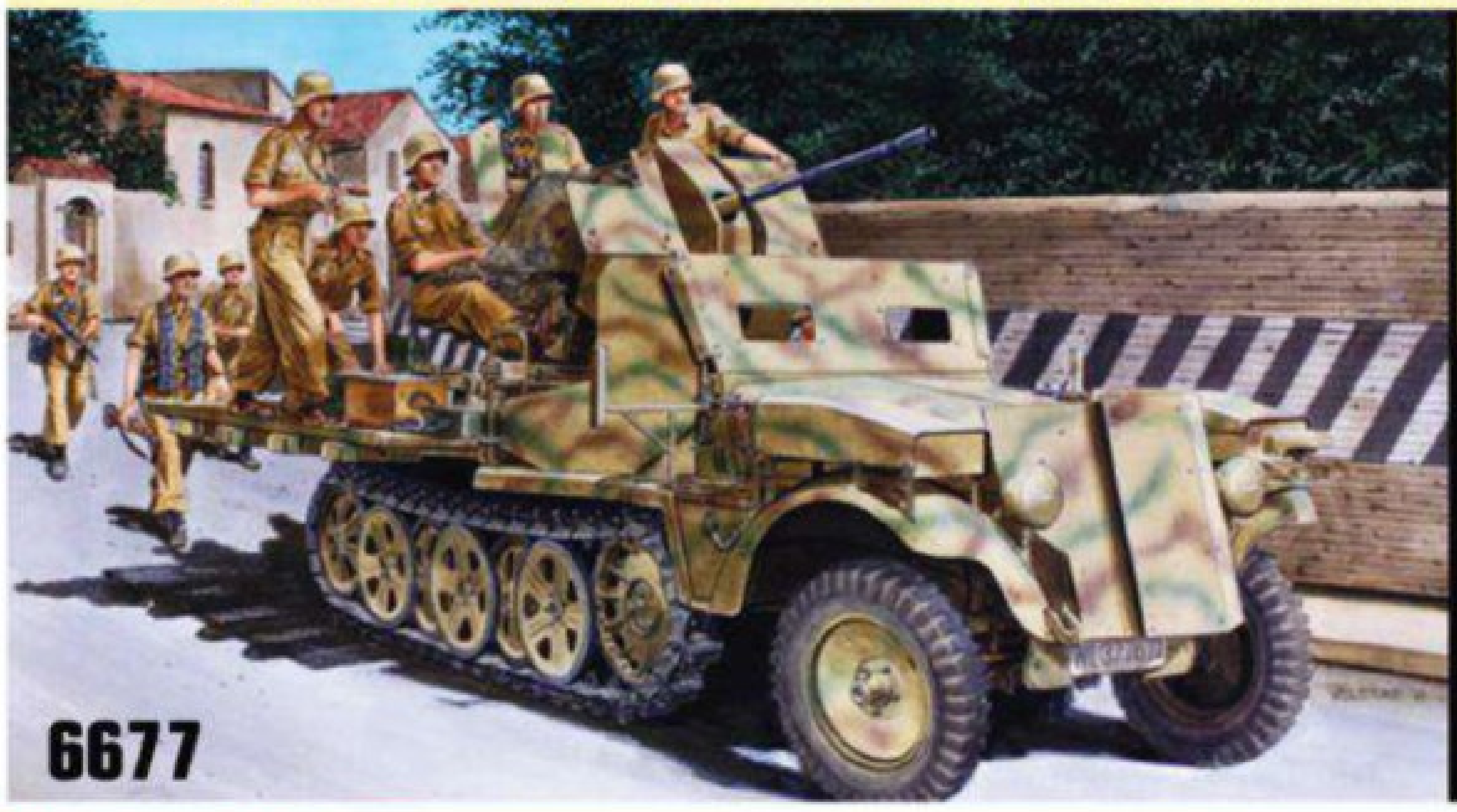

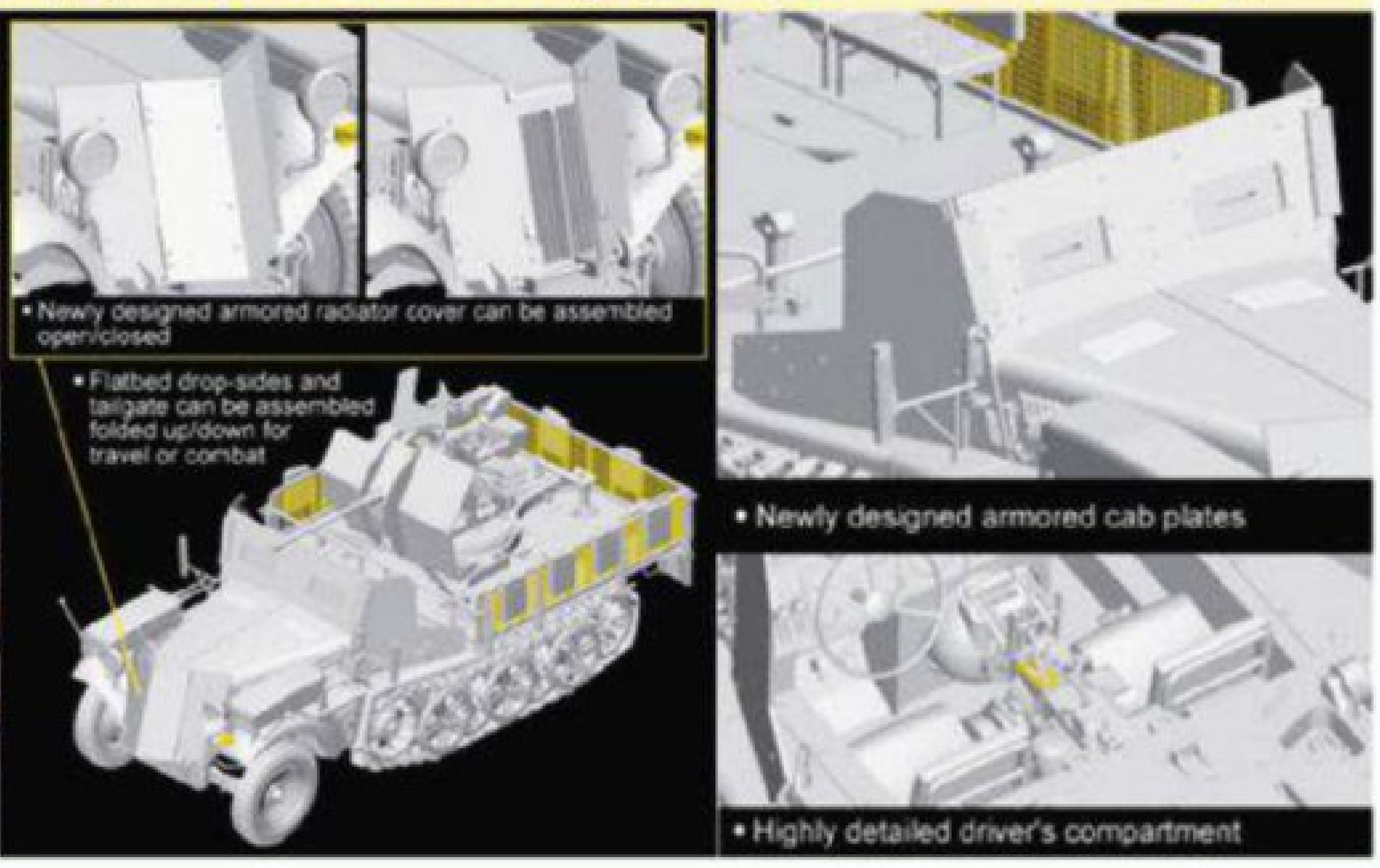
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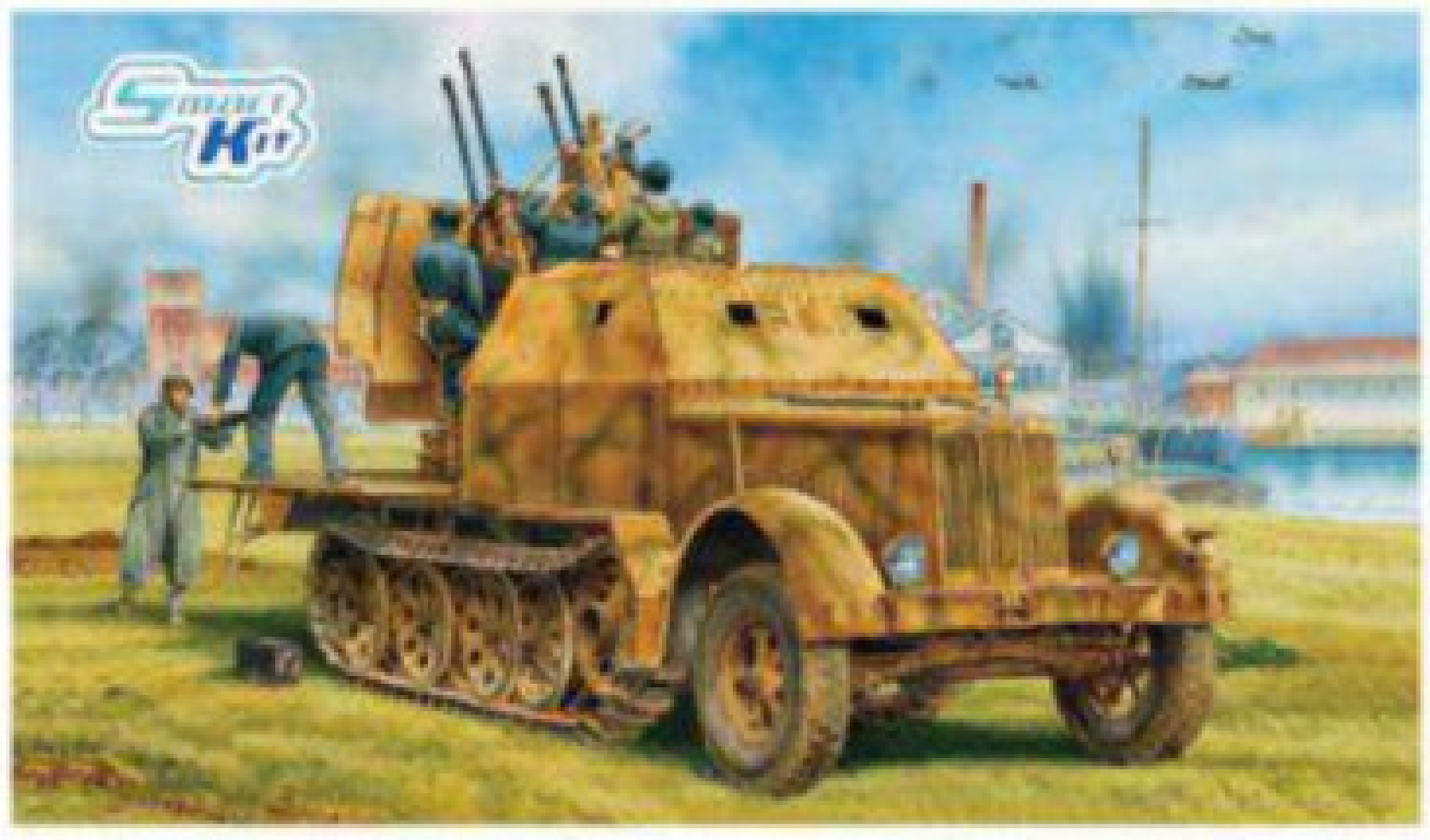

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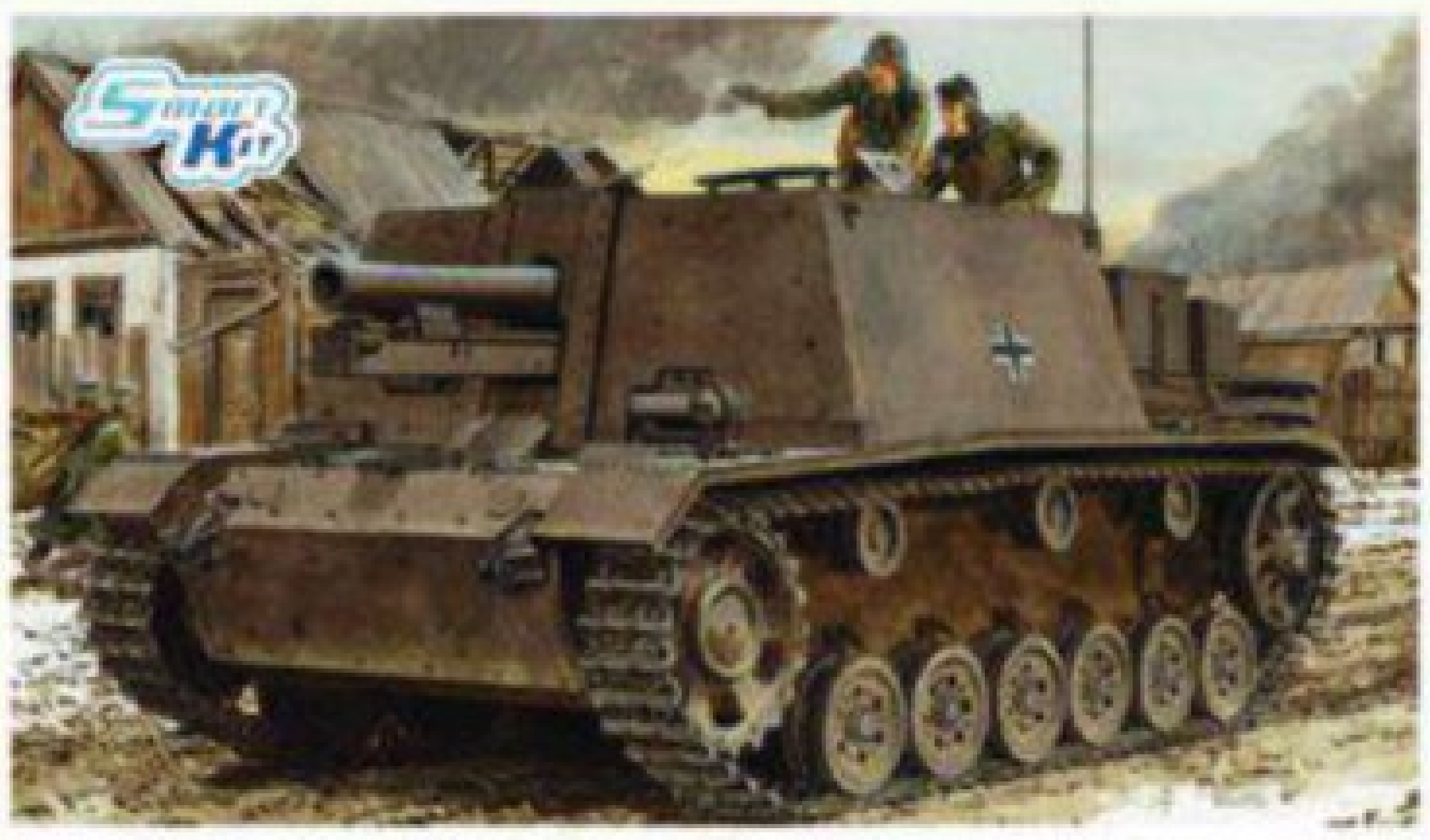

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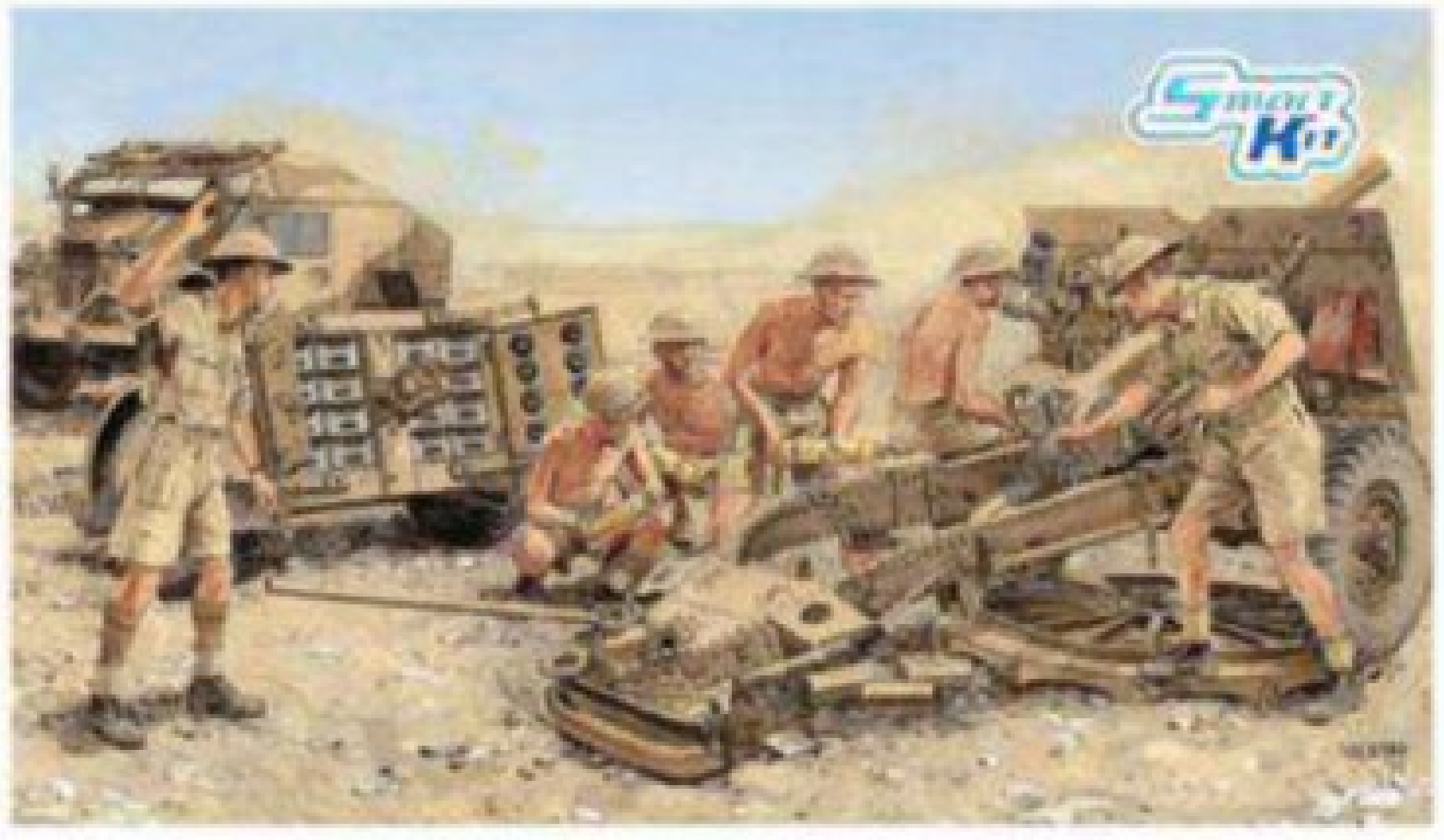

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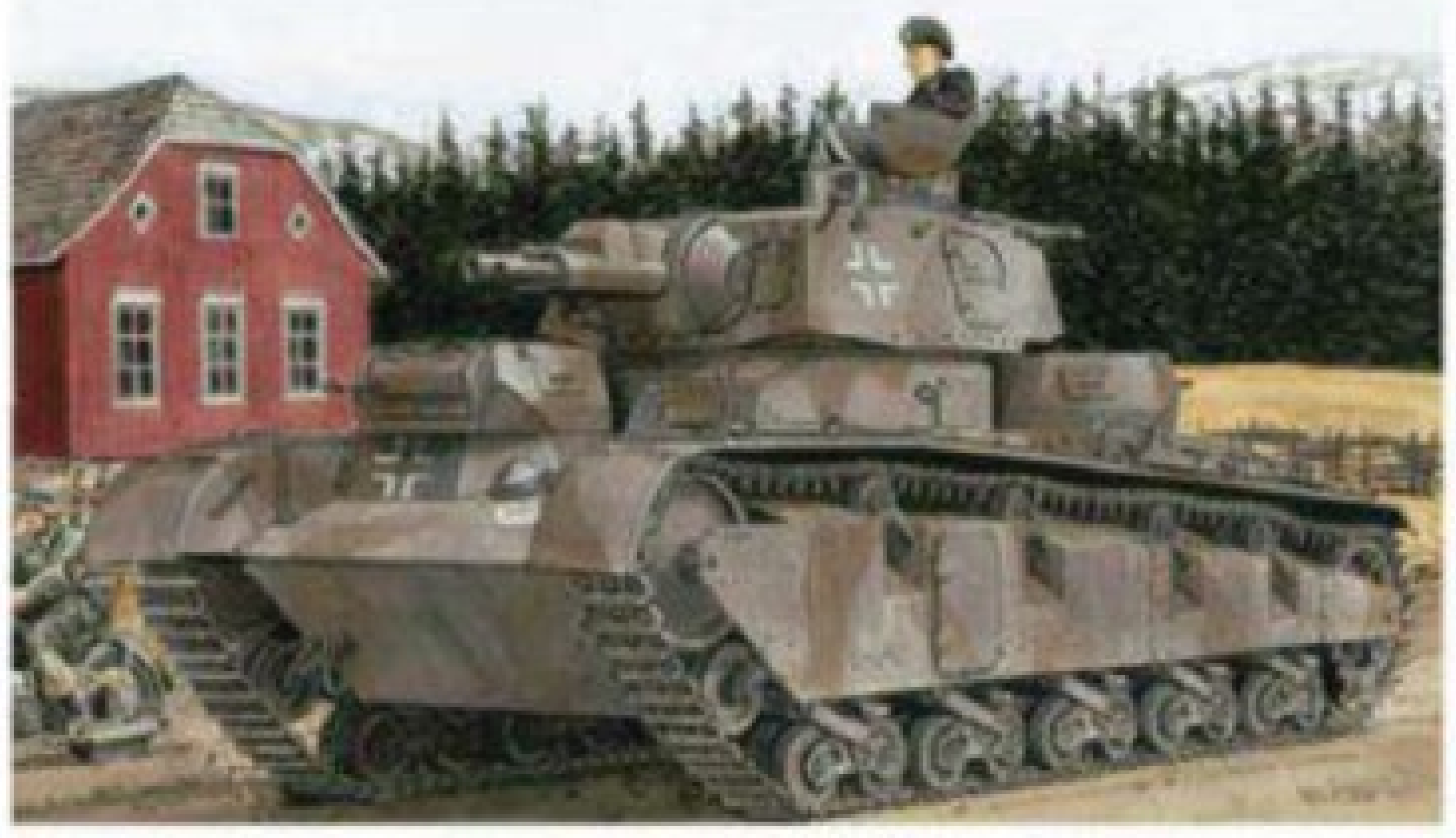

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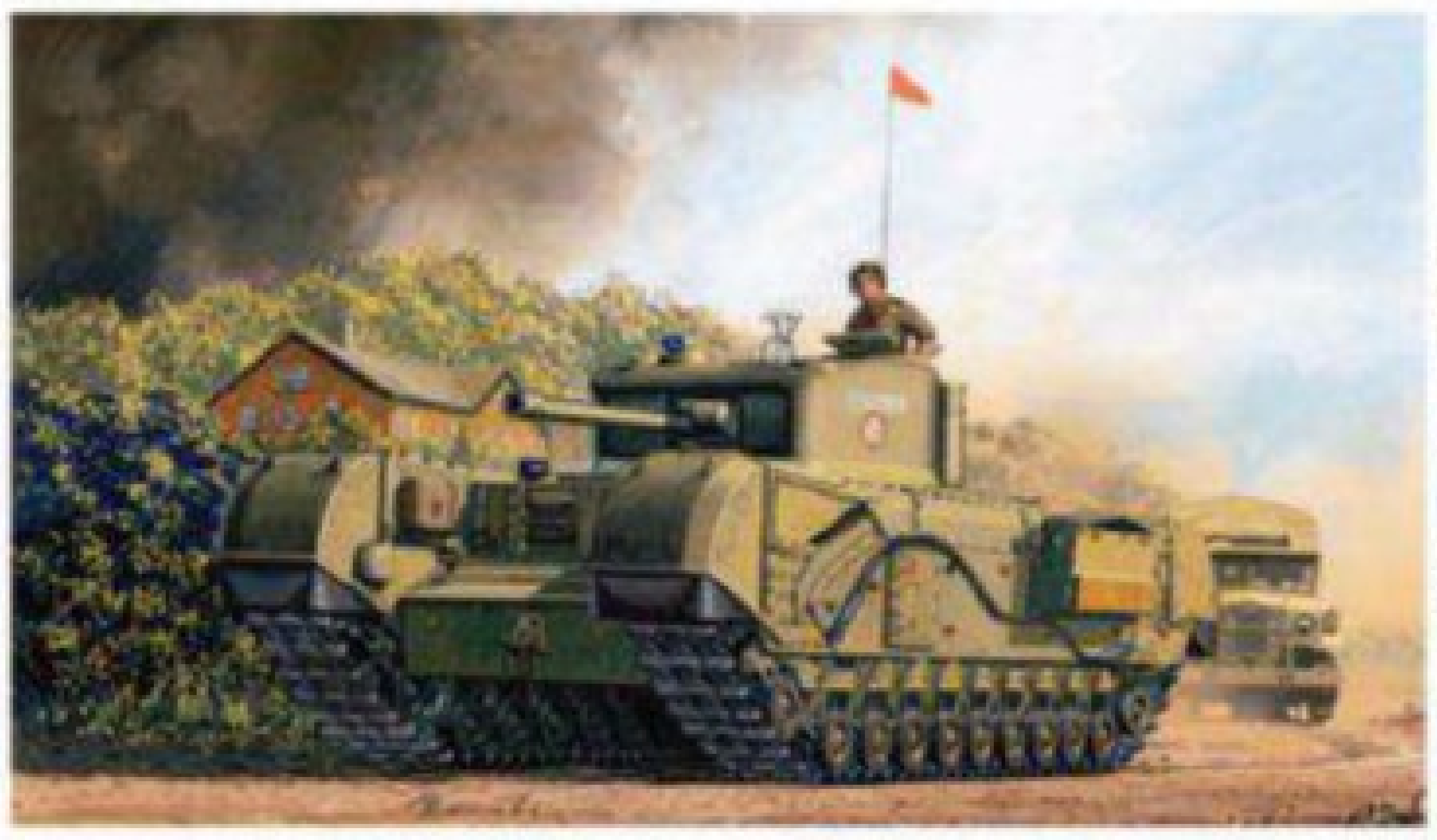

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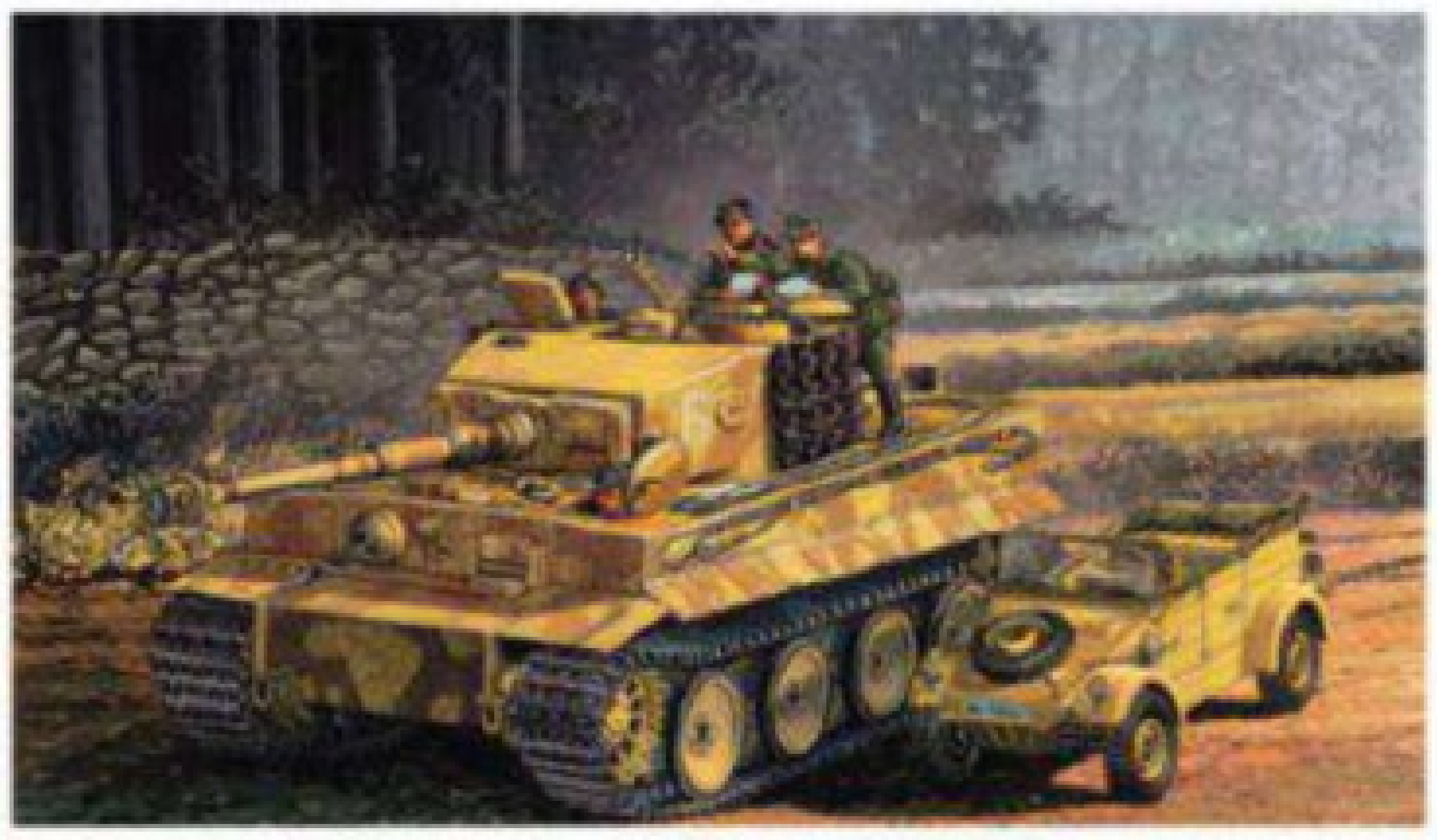

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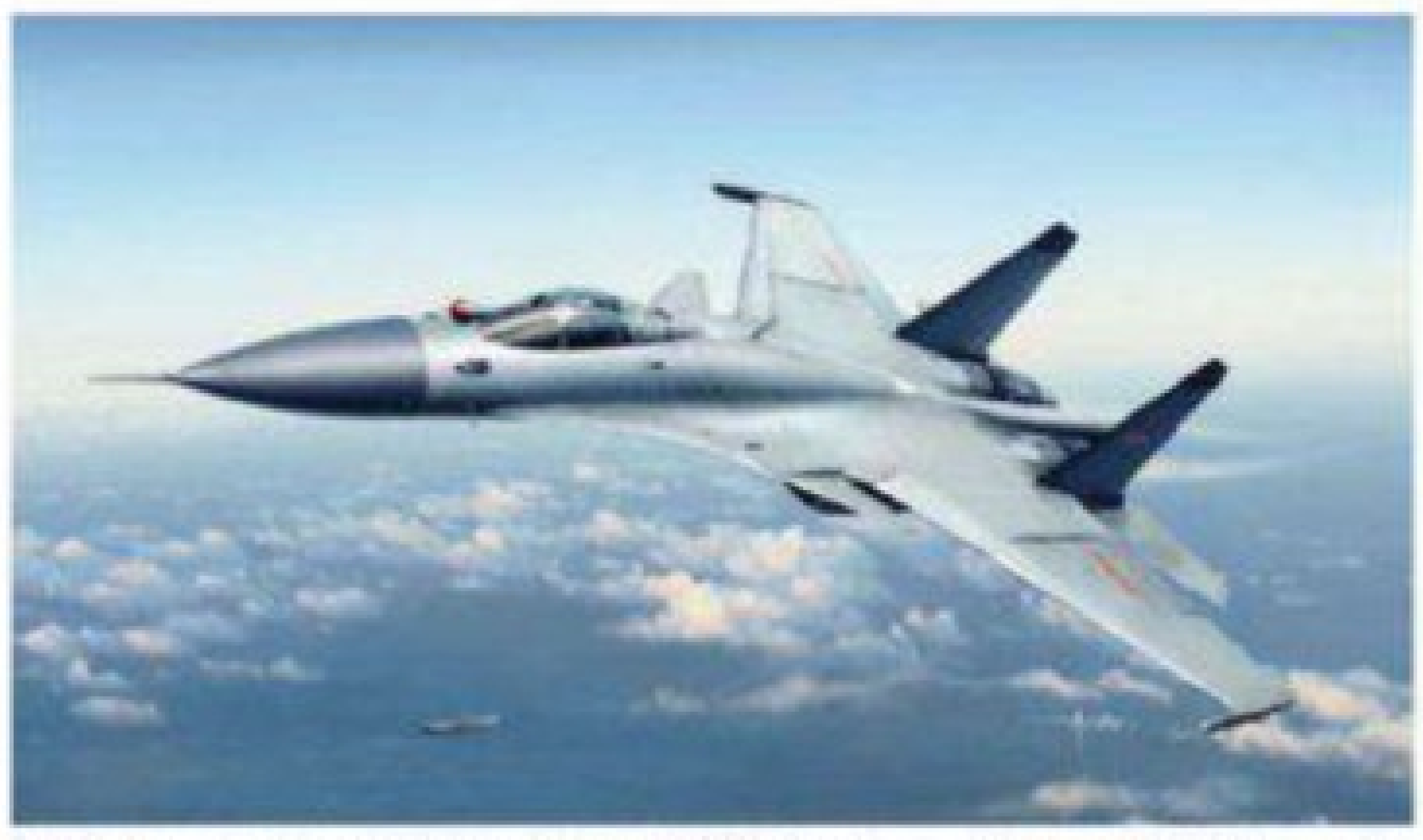

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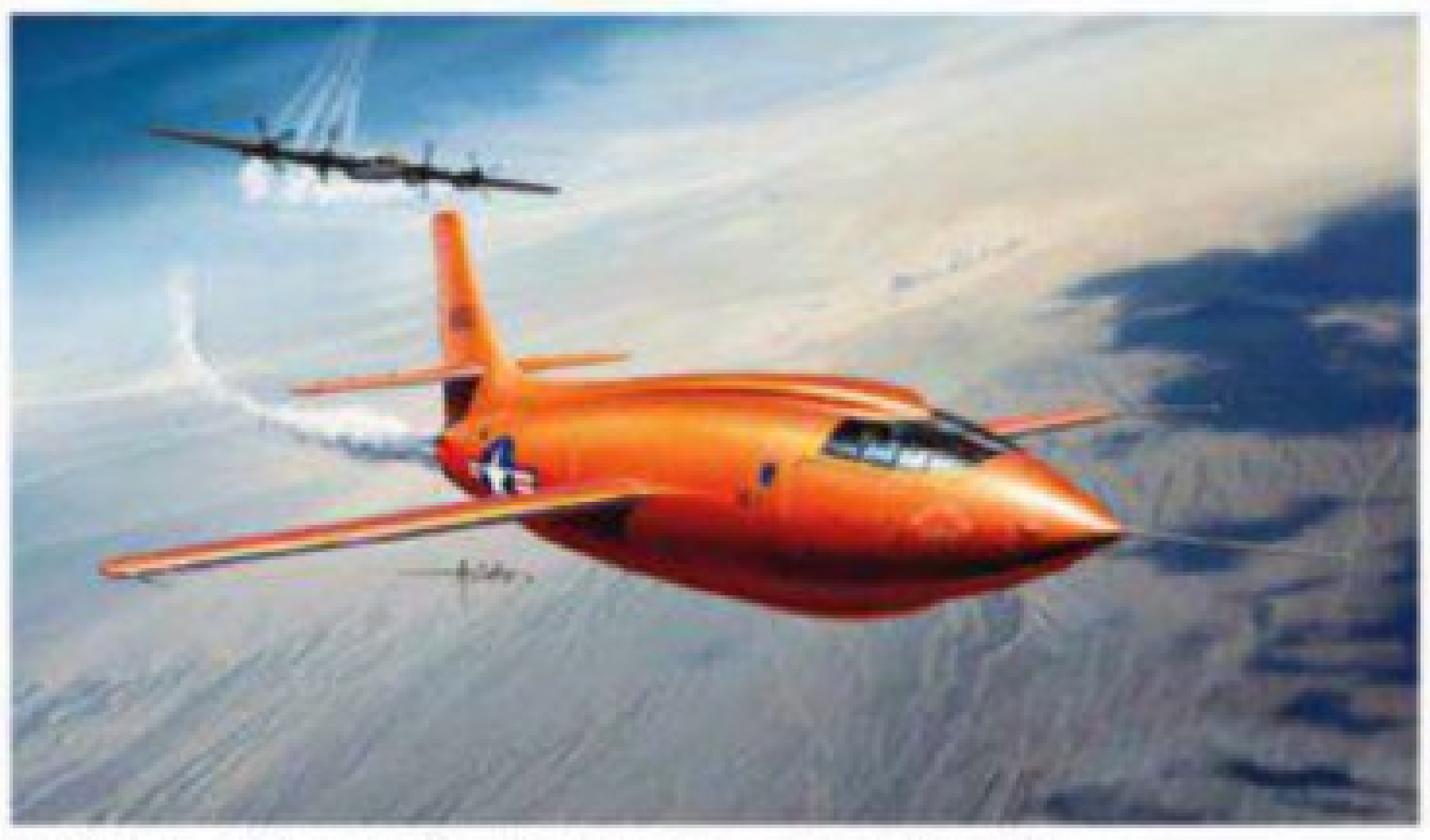

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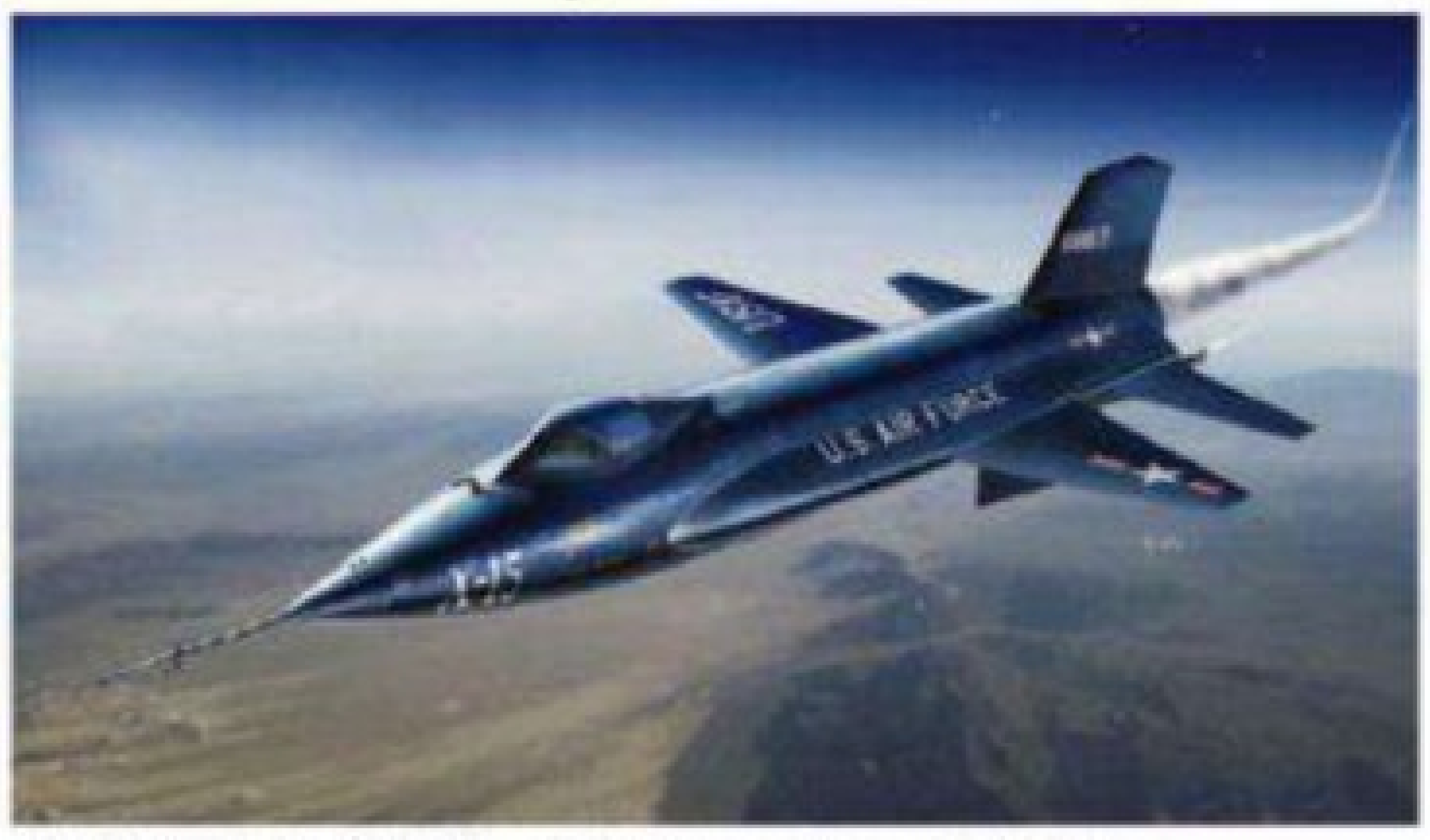

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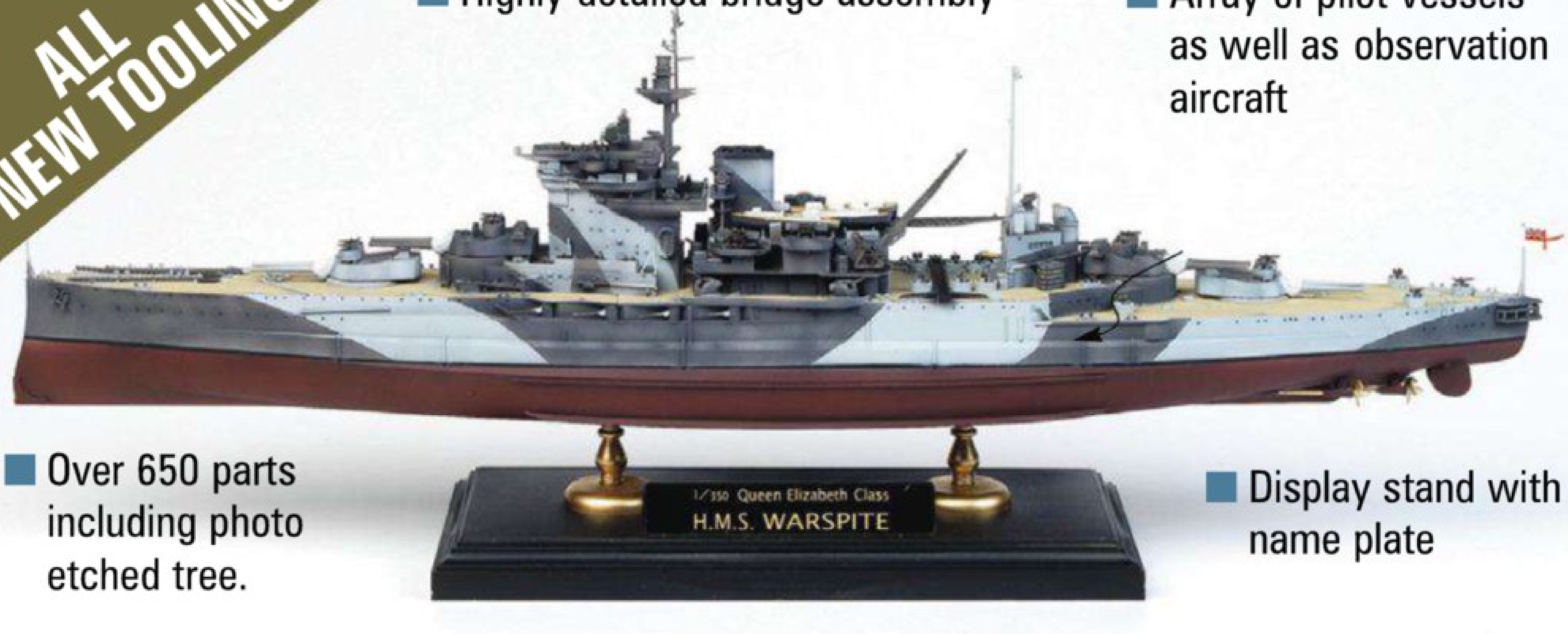

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